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Tangent at home.

MEMOIRS
OF
ROBERT WILLIAM ELLISTON
COMEDIAN.

“THE PLAYERS ARE MY PICTURES,
AND THEIR SCENES MY TERRITORIES.”
Tatler.

BY GEORGE RAYMOND, ESQ.

With Illustrations by “Phiz.”

SECOND EDITION.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
JOHN OLLIVIER, 59, PALL MALL.
1846.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the following pages, the Memoirs of Elliston are continued and concluded. The favourable reception which the former series met with, has rendered the completion of the work an act of duty.

The epistolary correspondence of many distinguished individuals with the lessee and manager of Drury Lane Theatre, will doubtless be read with interest ; and a further account of one of the most enterprising men who ever entered on theatrical life, is ventured with the hope, it may obtain some portion of fresh favour with those who have any curiosity in dramatic affairs.

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MEMOIRS,

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THE Royal Circus having undergone thorough repairs and extensive alterations, Elliston commenced his season (1810) on Easter Monday, under all those flattering prospects of success, which he was fairly entitled to entertain. The amphitheatre, which had hitherto been the arena of equestrian exercises, was now converted into a commodious "pit" for spectators; stables into saloons; and the mangers themselves into stalls of far different office—namely, "choice fruit and lemonade." The empire of the "Houyhnhnms" was, in fact, entirely at an end. Apollo and the

heavenly Nine appropriated the ceiling amongst them, elevating the thoughts of the spectator from the dung of Augeas to the azure of Olympus, whilst Bacchus and the laughing Ariadne participated an expansive proscenium, which glittered in the choicest symbols of intellectual banqueting. To this new house, Elliston gave the name of the "Surrey Theatre."

The entertainments on the opening night commenced by an address—a poetical rhapsody—the child of Busby, and the adopted of Elliston. The manager on his entrance was, of course, saluted by the firing of applause, which, as he proceeded with the poetical lines, so greatly increased, that, in his spirit of enthusiasm, either despising the trammels of laboured rhyme, or burning to exhibit himself in the fulness of his beloved faculty, he suddenly cast poor Busby aside, and in a true *Ellistonian* speech, o'ertopped, with a hundred-fold effect, the midnight travail of the bewildered Doctor. The poetry was conventional, but the speech was special; and though the unhappy rhymester was sadly shorn on the evening in question, he had the satisfaction of viewing himself at full length in the newspaper columns of the following morning.

The "Beggar's Opera" was the principal piece—Mrs. Garrick (formerly Miss Gray) sustaining the part of *Polly*. A bellipotent melodrame suc-

ceeded, in which there was a vast multitude in arms, and the cremation of the citadel, though it nearly choked the audience, had no power in stifling the huzzas of the people.

Early in this season, Miss Sally Booth—so long a favourite with the public, made her first London appearance on these boards. The “*Beaux Stragem*,” converted into a burletta (!) introduced this lady in the part of *Cherry*—Elliston himself, of course, filling that of *Archer*. This barbarous crotchet placed upon the drama, under certain restrictive licences, was, in this instance, complied with by great skill and considerable taste. Some delightful melodies were furnished by Mrs. Elliston, whilst the “*Musical Catechism*,” between *Cherry* and *Archer*, produced a very rapturous *en-core*; the rubric of the bills always announcing it in red letters.

The success of this dramatic transmutation induced a second of a similar nature; and some weeks subsequently, the “*Bold Stroke for a Wife*” was as adroitly invigorated with a decoction of music, and Mesdames Centlivre and Elliston the joint patentees of the *nostrum*.* The great praise which was due to the management takes but little,

* As an instance of the evil example of such proceedings, we would mention that, a few years after the above representation at the Surrey, this same play was again converted into an opera, and brought out at Drury Lane Theatre! Braham sustaining the part of *Colonel Feignwell*!

however, from the condemnation of such legal restraint.

But this course of harmony was now suddenly invaded by an event which rendered the present season of the Surrey Theatre, one of the most remarkable which had yet occurred. "The season of love was no more," and discord and heart-burnings, equalled only by the memorable O.P. insurrection on the plains of Covent Garden, in the year preceding, now agitated the extensive territory of St. George's Fields.

On the production of his pantomime, the spirited manager had engaged, as *Columbine*, a Miss Giroux, a sparkling brunette, "Of foreign aspect and of tender years." This young lady made her appearance accordingly, and the Surrey *Terpsichore* soon kindled a *tendre* amongst the "pretty fellows" of Nelson Square and Melina Place. Elliston, at this period also, had enriched his company by the services of a Miss Taylor, a lady inferior neither in personal attractions nor graceful accomplishments, to the magnetic Giroux. She was, perhaps, more of the Sylphide than the Muse. Giroux might have been *Apollo's* chosen—Taylor the beloved of *Oberon*.

Elliston being desirous of turning this "double cherry" to the best market, and believing the peach-blossom Taylor would, perhaps, be more

than equally attractive with the olive Giroux, invested her on a certain night with the diadem of pantomime, and Miss Taylor appeared for the first time in the part of *Columbine*.

Nelson Square and Melina Place were now in a state of positive insurrection. This was an usurpation to which they could not for a moment submit, and they at once determined to vindicate the rights of the dethroned queen. On the night in question—(that of the fair Taylor)—the *Girouites* assembled in considerable force, and securing the first rows of the pit, and the most advantageous position in the boxes, prepared themselves for the coming struggle.

The adherents of Taylor were on this night comparatively few, for they had been taken by surprise; but no sooner was the curtain raised for the commencement of the mystic scene, than acry of “Giroux!—Giroux!” sufficient to “Tear the cave where echo lies,” resounded from all quarters of the theatre. This evidence of unlooked-for hostility soon awakened the *Sybarite Taylors* to resistance. Worthy the cause, and the more inspired by the odds against them, they repelled, with triple force, this furious onslaught, and the very building was shaken to its base. The strife was now carried on in downright earnest. The opposing parties, no longer satisfied by words, sprang on the benches, and

crowded on the parapets of the boxes, giving the clearest indications that they were prepared for any result. The belligerents were in their element, and in his element was Elliston himself; for in the attitude of a speech he was speedily before them. But the honeyed words of *Ulysses* were here of no avail. Like the *Pythian* responses, his words were ambiguous, and his promises unsatisfactory. Still more exasperated were both parties, and the curtain fell amidst universal confusion.

On the second night, a fearful renewal of difference took place. "Taylor" was still in the bills, and the adherents of Taylor considerably multiplied.

The parties now contended under distinct leaders. One Thomas Barratt, a knight well worthy the blazonry of our poor history, marshalled the array on the side of the dazzling Taylor, while another, Michael Slater, not less in heroic beauty, mingled the gallant hearts which beat for the glory of Giroux. The rising of the curtain was again the telegraphic notice for the general onset. The *G's* and the *T's* went at it, pell mell. "O. P." was now completely eclipsed in "G. T." Hats bore the impress of their favoured initial; and no two letters of our time-honoured alphabet ever before came into such awful collision. To it they went; and history must accord them a page to the latest posterity. Now were the *Guelphs*

triumphant, and now the *Ghibellines* ; yet neither the Pope nor the Emperor could account two such lads of metal as Michael Slater and Thomas Barratt.

“ Nor Dindymenian, nor the Pythian priest,
Were with such fury by the gods possess'd ;
Nor Bacchantes, nor Corybantes so,
When on shrill brass they iterate the blow.”

To descend, however, from the stilts into which pantomime has elevated us, hostilities were thus carried on, night after night, with equal violence and improving method. On each succeeding evening, some new device, by one party or the other, was projected ; nay, such was the excitement, that, bursting the cerements of the theatre, it extended far beyond its walls, and, like the exhalations of a tanner's yard, impregnated the inhaling neighbourhood. The arrival of either “ The Giroux ” or The Taylor, at the stage-door, was a signal to their appropriate partisans, who hailed their own “ bright particular star,” as she descended from the hackney-coach. “ Taps ” and “ Spirit shops,” were tributary in the cause. The “ House of Call for Painters ” had emblazoned *The Giroux*, and “ The Duke's Head ” had been sacrificed to *The Taylor*. Placards, handbills, pasquinades, and acrostics were in merry circulation, while an itinerant song, founded on “ The Rival Queens,” collected a roaring auditory around the Obelisk. Amongst others,

we submit a copy of a precious protocol, which proceeded from the playhouse itself.

“ SURREY THEATRE.

“ Miss Giroux, deeply deploring the display of a spirit in this theatre, which, however flattering, is by no means calculated to serve her who is the object of it, presumes publicly to declare, that she has neither personally nor otherwise, encouraged any hostility to the professional pretensions of a young person, called Taylor ; nor has she acted in any way which might tend to lower herself from her high elevation in Public Opinion.

Miss Giroux takes the liberty to request, that the enlightened portion of the British public, which does her the honour to approve her performances, will add to so proud a distinction, the favour of abstaining from all unseemly contest, nor

‘ Mix with hired slaves, bravoës, and common stabbers.’

but allow, at once, Mind to triumph over Matter !

“ N.B. Miss Giroux is not aware, that in this generous nation it is disreputable to be either a Jew or a foreigner ; but attempts having been made to fix on her the *stigma* of both, she hopes it will not be deemed impertinent to state that she is neither. Miss Giroux is by no means a Jew, and

has the happiness, moreover, of being born an English young lady." *

But a question will naturally arise, What was the manager about this while? The truth is, these

* "When Cuzzoni and Faustina (two celebrated Italian singers) were in England together, the spirit of rivalry between themselves and of party amongst their patrons, was carried to an extravagant pitch. It is told by Horace Walpole, that his mother had them at her house to sing at a concert; she was under the greatest difficulty how to settle the precedence. Finding also it was impossible to prevail on the one to sing whilst the other was present, she took Faustina to a separate part of the house, under pretext of shewing her some curious china, during which time the company obtained a song from her rival Cuzzoni. A similar device was practised on the other hand to get Faustina to perform.

"The fashionable world was now convulsed by the feuds of these two ladies. Sir Robert Walpole having taken the part of Faustina, Lady Walpole countenanced the other; and when Sir Robert was from home, she invited them both to dinner.

"The Cuzzoni party was headed by the Countess of Pembroke, whose followers always hooted Faustina. The contention at the opera was at first only carried on by hissing on one side and clapping on the other, but at last proceeded to rattles and other instruments of discord. The presence of the Princess Caroline (1727) could not restrain the combatants. This affair produced the following:—

"Old poets sing that beasts would dance
Whenever Orpheus play'd—
So to Faustina's charming voice
Wise Pembroke's asses bray'd."

"The Countess of Burlington and Lady Delawar were amongst Faustina's leaders. Faustina was the handsomer of the two singers."—*Hogarth's Hist. of Music.*

nocturnal revels contributed materially to the health of the playhouse exchequer: the theatre was full, and full prices were paid nightly, and though the manager could not countenance such proceedings, (which his numerous speeches are as many evidences to shew,) yet he had not, at this time, displayed, in suppression of them, that vigour of purpose so peculiar to him.

But now, considering that the moment had arrived, in which if he did not interfere, some one else would; or being desirous of accomplishing that moral triumph, which had animated Giroux—namely, "Mind over Matter," he pompously stated that, on a certain night following, he would himself "give judgment in the case." The attitude he assumed for the purpose was consistent with this judicial language; for, on the ensuing Tuesday, when presenting himself on the stage for the purpose of judgment, not quite "sober as a judge," he turned towards the prompter, and with dignity which was positively superlative, exclaimed, "Bring me a chair!" This demand was heard by a burst of merriment from the auditory, and when, obedient to the order, the prompter appeared, bearing in a stately arm-chair, into which the manager sank with the severity of a Wedderburn, it was perhaps the most powerful stroke of burlesque ever witnessed.

The court, however, was soon in the utmost con-

fusion. The plenary indulgence which had evidently been the devotion of the manager, and the dissatisfaction which the "judgment" was giving to all parties, renewed the contest, and most wofully augmented the effects. The rattling chandeliers now responded to the crackling benches ; and as neither force could claim a victory over the other, they both united in the common cause of pillaging the country. These scenes being repeated on future nights, the manager was at length brought to his senses. The mock tribunal gave place to a court far beyond a joke ; the case was removed from Surrey to Westminster, where in July the Attorney-General applied for a rule &c. against the leaders of the fray. The two Columbines, in the hands of Sir Vicary Gibbs and Lord Ellenborough, must have produced a racy scene, by no means unamusing to the other gowns in the Court of King's Bench. The trial did not take place until the following May, when, on the conviction of the parties, the annexed document was published :—

“ SURREY THEATRE.

“ Whereas a criminal information has been filed in the Court of King's Bench against us the undersigned, Michael D. Slater, of the parish of Lambeth, and Thomas E. Barratt, of the same place, for the part taken by us in the riotous proceedings which occurred at the Surrey Theatre, in the months of

May and June last, under which we now stand convicted, and are liable to be called upon to receive judgment ; and whereas Mr. Elliston, the proprietor of the said theatre, has declined to accept any payment from us, towards compensating him for the heavy expense which he has incurred, and the serious loss which he has suffered by such riotous proceedings, but has, at our entreaty, consented to abstain from bringing us up to receive the sentence of the Court, on condition—

“ First,—That we should make a public acknowledgment of our sorrow for such offence ; and,

“ Secondly,—That we should subscribe a sum of money to the fund for the relief of the distressed Portuguese, in the following proportions :—that is, that I, Michael D. Slater, should so subscribe one hundred and five pounds ; and I, Thomas E. Barratt, twenty-one pounds.

“ Now, in pursuance of such conditions, we do hereby publicly express our deep and sincere contrition for the offence of which we have been guilty, as well by the disturbance of the respectable audiences collected at the said theatre, as by the injury done to the property and profits of the proprietor ; and we do declare ourselves in a high degree obliged to Mr. Elliston for the forbearance, by which he has relieved us from the severe con-

sequences which might have followed the imprudences we have committed.

“ M. D. SLATER,
“ 25 *May*, 1811. “ T. E. BARRATT.

“ Witnesses :

“ W. E. ALLEN, New Bridge-street,
“ Solicitor for Prosecutor.

“ SAML. VINES, Lincoln’s Inn,
“ Solicitor to the Defendant Slater.

At about this time, Elliston received the following from Mr. Warner Phipps :—

“ Having denied myself to you lately, on one or two occasions, you may be led to suppose I have some cause for offence. Such is indeed the case—and I have held much debate with myself, whether I can consistently now communicate with you in this manner. But I address a few words to you with the same sense of humanity as might urge me to extend a hand to one perishing by the road-side.

“ Believe me, my friend, you are becoming—have become, the shameless victim to a passion, which has, alas ! but little more to do in accomplishing your utter destruction. That destruction will be no single ruin, and the sin consequently in fearful proportion. It will be destruction of a mind naturally endowed by higher properties than fall commonly to the share of men—the abuse of advantages

far greater than many in your profession have ever been blessed with—utter desolation in the most affectionate bosom that ever beat for a husband's honour—and an example to children, whereby pollution will take possession of their minds in place of the seeds of early wisdom. You are publicly—you are universally known as intemperate—the vice dishonours you as a companion, and puts a brand upon you as a public man. I have not seen you on one occasion, in the clear, manly, possession of your faculties for the five last interviews I have had with you ; and if you think I now take a violent liberty with that which is your own affair, you must look on it as the incision of the knife, the only arrest to the gangrene which must otherwise destroy you.

“ As heartily as I have received you as my friend, so will I distinctly throw you off, if these things are repeated. This is not the first time that I have used this language ; but I have been willing to believe the verbose confessions you once made to me, proceeded from a vigorous resolution to amend. I do not wish vexatiously to recall to your mind the favours you have received from me, by my advice in your complicated concerns ; but in addition to the difficulties which such concerns must necessarily throw on one who undertakes their investigation, I will not add the unthankful perplexities of seeing my labours rendered abortive, by the madness or stupidity of habitual ebriation.

“Your habit has led me most reluctantly to this conclusion ; and the scene which took place at the house of a common acquaintance, on the 15th of this month, has called forth the present letter. Elliston—I will not beg the question with a man in your critical position—you have not a moment to lose—your respectability is expiring—your energies declining—your estate wasting—and your very hopes are themselves becoming hopeless.

“What was it that first gave me delight in your acquaintance, and which afterwards made me seek your confidence ? (for I acknowledge both these)—it was your extraordinary industry—your interesting energy—your evident talents—and your amiable family. The last will never lose their claim upon me, for unfortunately that must increase, as my sense of the former points is fast vanishing.

“Had I first known you in these latter days, I should have avoided you with studied caution ; and in saying this, believe me, I speak only the sentiment of all respectable men. Think not that you gain anything by the loud laugh at a coarse jest—the reward is as worthless as the achievement itself is despicable.

“Of particular circumstances, there is one I would notice before concluding. You have hinted lately, I believe, at my carrying some communication or other to Mrs. Elliston. That is not the case—and I regret it is necessary for me to as-

sure you that it is not so. Mrs. Elliston has twice called on me under evident distress—great, very great, mental anxiety. Once she called, after the day of your opening, and again about three weeks since. These were occasioned by your absence from home on the whole of the two previous nights, without either notice or the most careless explanation. She might have deemed that some accident or business had detained you, but she had too evident grounds for belief, that she had more reason for sorrow in the cause of your estrangement, than a broken shin or protracted pantomimes. Of your distinct errors, our only conversation was—on that subject, which, like the daylight, is clear to all.

“I do not trust that I have not wounded you ; on the contrary, I hope I have deeply probed you. If I am not of weak resolution myself, you will never again receive such a letter as this from me ; for you either will not require it, or if you do, it must proceed from some other hand.

“God bless you !—and in that I would say, God bless you by timely reflection. W. PHIPPS.”

The language of this letter produced a deep impression on the mind of the truant. Elliston was obviously abashed—crest-fallen. He knew how just the imputations had been, and he felt how sincere and disinterested was the man who had urged them. At about this very time, also, Elliston received

another of those mysterious epistolary favours from *Invisiblina*, alluding, in equally strong terms, to that same scene of dissipation and riot, which had formed part of Mr. Phipps' accusation. This, if not tending to his deeper depression, at least multiplied his perplexities. The "whereabouts" of this *Invisiblina*—the machinery by which she directed her operations—and the nice accuracy of her intelligence, more and more bewildered him.

He was now suddenly visited by one of those violent calls of righteousness and reformation, which have more sincerity at the moment than steadiness of purpose—a sense of holiness, like love, far too hot to hold, and Elliston now turned towards Stratford Place, regretting, perhaps, that the days of mortification were past, for, like Blaise Pascal, he would at that moment have bound himself in an iron girdle, or put on the hair-shirt of a penitent of La Trappe. Certain it is, he returned to his wife in a temper of submission as little worthy reliance as his late engagements had been of imitation. But he returned to one whose soul was as generous as her affections ardent. This excellent woman, like the gentle "*Amelia*," received the penitential "*Booth*" with cheerful forgiveness, while Warner Phipps, like the good "*Dr. Harrison*," looked on, with the sincere hope that so fair a beginning would be consistently maintained.

Elliston, as we have noticed elsewhere, was subject also to chronic attacks of a religious nature. He would occasionally turn to his Bible with the zeal of a very Baxter, which, if he had in part commuted for some portion of the reformer's fortitude, might have been wholesome. But, like the blue lights of his own playhouse, his zeal threw around but a momentary glare, and presently left the scene in deeper darkness than before. Unsteady as was his temper, there was no wilful hypocrisy in Elliston; indeed, so thoroughly was he imbued with every sense of the moment, that his excellency on the stage was materially owing to it,—for at each impersonation, the very spirit of the character so thoroughly passed into him, that he could not but be the identical creature he appeared.

Lovegrove, during the very few years his health permitted him to act, made a rapid advance in public favour. He appeared in the part of *Lord Ogleby*, in the Drury Lane company at the Lyceum, on the 3rd of October—a *debut* highly flattering; for the occasion invited the critiques of the best judges of theatrical pretensions, which, on entering into considerable detail respecting his merit, unanimously pronounced him an actor of the highest promise. These predictions were not unverified; and Lovegrove, in the short space of six years, established a fame on which popular opinion was

absolutely undivided. No one found any fault with Lovegrove—a circumstance which is by no means a consequent attendant, even on the most brilliant career of histrionic art. The chastity of nature was never lost sight of in the humour of the part, nor the fidelity of character sacrificed to jocular effects. But with this, Lovegrove was no tame actor—his colouring was strong, but the lights and the shadows fell naturally—his impersonations forcibly characteristic, never caricature. He certainly would have gained the *Harcourt prize* in the Dramatic University.

In private life, Lovegrove was a singular man. Though by no means an ascetic, he appeared to have but few associates. With his professional brethren, he had no intercourse whatever; his place of residence was entirely unknown; nor had the prompter any other means of communicating with him on the business of the stage than by directing his letter to the door of the theatre. But Lovegrove's amiable and obliging manner secured to him respect, and sufficiently proved, that his singularity was not the result of misanthropy or selfishness; nor was it amongst the least strange things, that a man so constituted, should have chosen the profession of an actor.

This idiosyncrasy not unnaturally induced some to believe, that much of the adventure we are about to relate, as told by Lovegrove himself, was the off-

spring of his own heated imagination, and in its turn, became the parent of a monster. There is no doubt that something singular and alarming had taken place (for Lovegrove was by no means one inclined to practical jokes), but which a mind predisposed in the nature we have described his, might have peopled with many additional images.

It was at the early period of his brief career, that Lovegrove, on a certain evening, having acted his part, had quitted the Lyceum early, on his way home, as it is supposed. At about midnight, just as the curtain had closed the night's entertainment, the theatre watchman (the only person at the moment on the stage-floor) was startled by a piercing exclamation of—" Help! for God's sake, help!" and Lovegrove himself, covered with brick-dust and mortar, rushed over the stage, in a state of frenzy, and pursuing his way into the green-room, dropped, exhausted, into a chair.

The whole establishment was presently in a bustle, and many persons hastened to the scene of affright. Lovegrove was still seated, representing a portrait of dismay, more striking perhaps than any ever yet portrayed within the walls of that theatre. Being sufficiently restored to make himself understood, he gave the following recital:—

" As I was passing the end of Dyott-street, I was powerfully assailed by two women of gaunt and

masculine appearance, who as instantaneously pinioned me with a cord, as the sensation was, and hurried me down a blind cellar, immediately contiguous to the spot where I had just been standing. Surprise and terror totally deprived me of the power of voice. In this state, I was forced on through a dank, noisome passage, apparently quite underground—wet and putrid as a common sewer. We then reached the foot of a crazy staircase, where was stationed a ruffian, worthy the wretches in whose hands I was confined. By the hasty glance I had, his beard was of a fortnight's growth, his head perfectly bald, and he wore a long rough drab coat, stained with all manner of filth. He carried a lantern. I noticed he had but one hand, an iron hook on the stump of his arm supplied the other. Their purpose, whatever it might have been, was well understood, for not a word passed between the women and this man. I was thence forcibly pushed up several flights of stairs, the man leading the way.

An effort I now made of resistance, when one of the women grasped me by the throat, blaspheming and laughing. We were still mounting. We could not have ascended less than five or six flights of stairs from the depth of the first cellar. We at length reached a door, which the conductor unfastened, whence we passed to the open roof of the house, and after a few paces, through another door-

way into an attic of an adjoining house. I shrieked aloud—but the door was slammed to and instantaneously locked. The women now relaxed their hold ; and at the motion of our begrimed leader, disappeared through a trap at the bottom of the wall, at a further end of the room. The man now lighted a candle. I grasped his coat. ‘ In God’s name, explain this ! ’ cried I. But he resolutely moved on, and stooping through the aperture, whence the women had departed, I heard the entrance barred on the other side.

“ My senses now almost abandoned me. I again screamed aloud—but not a sound, not a footstep did I otherwise hear. I looked around. In a corner of this foul apartment was a low bed. I gazed on it with renewed apprehension, and beheld, stretched therein, a human form—apparently a female—she breathed heavily, as though in agony of body. I moved nearer, and distinctly saw marks of violence on her features. The creature was dying—evidently expiring of hurts she had received. A horrid conviction seized me, that I had been brought here for the purpose of fixing on me evidence of her murder.

‘ Tell me ! ’ I exclaimed—‘ who—what are you ? ’ An agonizing groan was my only reply—and a sigh—’twas the last of life’s effort—for I am convinced, at that moment, the object before me breathed her last. I was now frantic—frantic with

fear, and felt equal to any exertion. I perceived near me the fragment of some furniture—perhaps the very weapon which had inflicted the blow of death—I seized it. The door was locked, but the fastening—a heavy wooden lock—was in some degree parted from the panel. Into this chink, I thrust violently the piece of timber. I felt it bite—the lever to bear—and with the force of desperation, I wrenched it from its position—the door gave way. I rushed along the roof, over which I had previously been hurried—God only knows the peril I was then passing—the door of the first house was unbarred. I descended the staircase—for it was dark, almost as pitch—and I ran, or rather fell down several flights.

“ I must have reached nearly the bottom of our former ascent, when the voice and figure of one of the female demons who had just quitted me, again scared my senses. I could not mistake the wretch. A fresh act of desperation animated me. I at once retreated—again mounted a few steps, and found myself at a window. I forced it open—climbed to the frame-work, and sprang——God has preserved me!—and sprang—I knew not whither. But I fell yet alive—unhurt—into a kind of stable. I now noticed a faint light on the ground-floor of the contiguous building—one of those dens, it appeared, for marine stores. Two men were sitting. I rushed forward—passed them like the wind, and

found myself in a narrow unlit street. I still ran wildly on—windings—passages—but in what direction, I knew not. Flight, flight alone possessed me. Danger was at an end, yet I felt I could still but fly. A recollection of objects now returned—the way at length became familiar—and I ran, ran on, till I met you here. What have I not escaped!”

Mysterious as was the narrative, nothing was ever known further of this adventure. Lovegrove’s natural reserve soon baffled the curiosity of his friends, and after a few days, the explication was altogether left to the surmises of those who had witnessed the scene in the theatre.

CHAPTER II.

A gaming house—History of Mr. L.—A night with Elliston—More play—Elliston a real hero—His generous behaviour—Fresh inconsistencies—A death-bed repentance—Anecdote of King—A literary association—The eccentric John Dunton—A dilapidated schoolmaster—Choice books—Suits of armour—Great success—The Rev. Rowland Hill—The Rev. James Harvey—An anecdote—The Haymarket theatre—"Quadrupeds of Quedlinburg"—Elliston and Munden—Joe's pet joke—A humorous assault—Sir Claudius Hunter—Lord Mayor's day—Unhandsome behaviour—A reeling champion—Dead beat—A fire.

THE partial eclipse into which the comedian's fame had been thrown, by the shadow of Phipps' letter over its surface, being now at an end, and the luminary once again in its full splendour, we will forget all causes of the worthy actuary's anger, as related in our last, and proceed to the more grateful task of recounting an act of generosity, by which the moral debt of our hero will be considerably lightened, and himself restored to the favour of the indulgent reader.

Amongst the various places of Elliston's resort for the purpose of hazard, was a house in the neighbourhood of Blackfriars, where he had occasionally met Mr. L——, a young gentleman of

sickly appearance, but who still followed up the phantom of play with that excitement so peculiar to the passion, and which, for the time, is able to sustain the weakest frame in all the heated combinations of its pursuit.

At places of this kind, personal intercourse is generally no other than that arising from the traffic of the table, nor does a thought or word transpire which is not employed on the undivided purpose of rapine. So long as the gold glitters on the table, no inquiries are made—recognition extends not beyond the walls of the moral lazaret, and consciousness of the longest acquaintance nightly expires, as the object himself passes from the presence of the observer.

But respecting this young man, a more particular history has reached us. If not the most striking, he was perhaps one of the most melancholy examples of a gambler's state ever witnessed. Mr. L—— was at this time about twenty-six years of age. Disease had already possessed him under that form, which so frequently mingles the cruel mockery of hope with the most peremptory fiat of mortal certainty. His manners were gentle—his temper unassailable; and at those brief intervals which the demon passion of play permitted his mind a moment's freedom, he exhibited an understanding of no ordinary quality, and a taste (particularly in the fine arts) highly cultivated. But the whole occupation of his flickering exist-

ence was literally passing to and fro, from his own home to this apartment of despair. Here, in the evening, he arrived at about eight o'clock, in a hackney-coach, and by the same means, at any unknown hour, quitted the house on his return. Here, with the entire sum of his estate and strength, he was a nightly visitor, for his other hours were literally a course of exhaustion—his daily journey between a mortal and a moral grave. With this gentleman, Elliston had sometimes conversed, and more frequently played.

It happened on a certain evening the comedian had been singularly fortunate—had won a considerable sum, the greater portion of which, the proceeds of Mr. L——'s purse. The majority of the company had by this time departed; indeed, all the *habitués* of the house, except Elliston and his companion, who continued their play. Good fortune still followed our hero, and by two o'clock he was a winner to the full amount of his adversary's ready effects—perhaps of his resources. But Mr. L—— was calm and unruffled. He paid his money, and handed over some further acknowledgments.

"You will still play on?" said Elliston. "You must recover some of this to-night."

"No, not to-night," responded Mr. L——.

"Nay—you must take some vengeance of me," continued the other, "the jade must be wooed; take my word for it, she'll be fond after pouting."

Come, we have played before together!"—saying which, he presented sundry bank-notes to his companion, and again set the table.

The game was renewed—the stakes higher; and, at the conclusion of another hour, Elliston was still a considerable winner.

A slight flush, rather of exhaustion than anxiety, passed over the features of Mr. L——, and he rose to depart.

"I do not like this," said Elliston; "we must not part at such odds as these; you shall still have your revenge, and to-night, too."

L—— rebuked him only with a faint smile, adding, "We're later than usual. Do you hear what a night it is? I will set you down."

"As you please; but I have protested you shall have your revenge. The cards here are against you—another place will be more fortunate. Are you content to try again? You shall have luck to-night; but not here—not here."

"What do you propose?" asked L——, with animation.

"Come. I'll shew you."

The companions now entered the hackney-coach, and, after a drive of fifteen minutes, were set down in Stratford Place. Elliston led Mr. L—— into an apartment, and some refreshment being at hand, they partook accordingly.

"I have disappointed you so far," said Elliston;

"this is not quite the gay scene you may have anticipated. But, courage! your more immediate object is here," (continued he, shuffling the cards.)

"I never won a guinea in my own house yet, and I am sure Fortune will not be inclined to follow me, on such a night as this, after abandoning her so scurvily in Blackfriars."

"Come, then, to some further business," replied L——.

Down they sat. Luck now blew from a fresh quarter under the new sky in which they played. L—— was recovering—a transient, treacherous success, adding mockery only to the certain course of the infatuated gamester. Again—again he lost; new loans were advanced and further acknowledgments handed over to his opponent. It was now past three o'clock.

"Why, how is this?" said Elliston, with marked gravity, as he deliberately turned up a pile of notes, and spread the specialities before him—"this is a large amount, Mr. L——, a very considerable sum of money. You must have lost——"

"More, perhaps, than what enriches you," interrupted the other, with a bitterness unusual to him—"the debt—the debt! What is the debt?" demanded he, impatiently.

"True; it must be lessened," replied the comedian, in a sententious tone. "I think—I am sure, it may. At any rate, you have a better security

to give me for my demands. I am not quite satisfied."

"Mr. Elliston," cried the other, as a sudden flush spotted his pale cheek, "what am I to think of this night's transaction—this strange irritation? Does a man necessarily forfeit his credit with his money? And though I know you for a fair dealer, yet let me remind you, that he who provokes the game does little better than take advantage of his friend."

"Will you for five minutes resume your seat?" said Elliston, solemnly—"we must not part yet. They tell me I am fond of long speeches, but I'll be brief, for our time is so. I have told you I must have further—better security for the work done to-night—I am not satisfied. But in the first place, here"—(continued he, in the tone of one calmly determined)—"here, Mr. L——, is the cash, and the whole amount of what I have this night won from you; and that we may proceed without risk of retracing a step, I seriously pronounce no power on earth shall induce me to retain one guinea."

L—— gazed in speechless attention—he knew not the nature of his own emotions.

"This has been a long sitting," resumed Elliston—"has broken deeply into our rest, but it shall close to our comfort—to our happiness, if you but permit it. Mr. L——, you are far from a state of health—perhaps not a long-lived man; think

how little time, therefore, could be given to reflection, even were the whole amount so devoted. Do not despise the admonition of even an erring man ; and let not pride, that pitiful illusion, be the last cheat to leave you barer than poverty. Never," (concluded he, with great energy,)—"never will I touch again one farthing of this sum—it is yours, or it consumes this night before your eyes. Now for the security I ask—give me the honour of a man you will never play again."

The accents of the young man failed upon his lips, but the tears rolled down his cheeks, and his frame drooped by exhaustion.

"Alas ! alas !" sighed he, after a labouring pause. "How am I humbled ! In the sense of my own worthlessness, and before the generosity of this man, how am I humbled !"

"Humbled !" cried Elliston, with energy—"humility !—why, how is this, when I had hoped on both sides for exultation ? Exultation, I confess it, on my part, that I had been able to achieve a substantial good, and exultation, still greater on yours, that you had secured the moment whilst it yet remained, to make peace with your own conscience. Will you give me the word of a man ?"

"Yes ; and before God, my witness——"

"No—no—not that !" interposed Elliston. "I have no right with such a bond ; and believe me, my friend, if the deliberate word of a deeply im-

pressed mind should ever submit to dishonour, a more solemn contract would yet live to be despised, whilst the penalty would be multiplied a hundred-fold. Give me but your word—your word of honour.”

Such was the generous appeal, awakening, as may be imagined, the long abused and paralysed energies of the poor youth to whom it had been addressed. It was not made in vain ; and the security which our hero had so warmly sought, was given with all the impassioned evidence of sincerity.

Elliston was of a temperament fully to enjoy that sublimation of delight which such an adventure was so calculated to produce. His end had been accomplished ; for when again visiting (strange and inconsistent as is the nature of man) the old scene of riot and dissipation, he discovered his friend had returned no more, but had been recalled by his means to the timely task of binding up a wounded conscience, he felt a sense of happiness far surpassing any amount of his varied life. But strange and inconsistent, we repeat, as man's nature is, Elliston himself still continued to visit Blackfriars as usual, so that all traces of the past scene were soon lost in the mazes of the hazard-table.

Such, alas, was poor Elliston !—one of those who appeared to regard righteousness, as a liberal host does his best wine, using but little of it himself and reserving his stock for the benefit of his friends.

About three months from the above event, Elliston, after an absence of two days from home, found the following letter, amongst many others, on his return to Stratford Place :

“ I am dying—from this bed of pain and anguish I can never rise. I am dying—and God knows how willingly, but for that, which can alone make death terrible ! If to one almost lost to hope, there could be an interval of quiet, such is the moment I pronounce, ‘ Bless you ! God bless you, sir ! ’ You know why I should say, God bless you ! An hour like mine must be past all hypocrisy, else I should but profane that justice I invoke to bless you. Hear me, sir, it is my last worldly office, and I have done. You would have rescued me from ruin—would have restored me to that, which all men, ere they die, will discover to be the only true joy on earth.

“ For a time, shame—for it was not virtue, nor common honesty—shame guarded my steps, and baffled that fiery passion, with which my neglected boyhood had grown up familiar. I did not play—avoided, fled all means of play—all place, all time, in which even danger might lie disguised. But my mind, so long estranged from honourable bent, became a void—would not be roused—’twas steeped—’twas poisoned, sir ! The venom had stung my very soul to death, and I became the helpless, hopeless, despicable thing—a confessed liar ! I returned to vice—I hurried to destruction

—dishonoured that last, last bond, not to be sued on earth, and in pain, in poverty, in contempt, and utter desertion, I am fast, fast dying! But all will perish with me, except my disgrace! Bless you—bless you, sir! It still comforts me to say so. I shall die with it on my lips.”

Deeply affected, it may well be imagined, was Elliston, on reading this distressing history. The letter had been dated three days back, from some street in Westminster, but without number of the house. Elliston went immediately, with the full determination of discovering the penitent; and though he could anticipate nothing in the meeting but of a most painful nature, yet he could not resist the desire which impelled him to the interview.

In this object he had some difficulty, for he applied at several lodging-houses without success, and had nearly given up his pursuit, when he accosted a female in the act of descending the steps of a house he had previously passed. It was here Elliston gained all his intelligence—for it was the house in which poor L—— had that morning breathed his last.*

This narrative recalls strikingly an incident in the career of King, the actor. King played deeply; and on a certain occasion he borrowed five guineas,

* The substance of the incident above was communicated to the Editor of these Papers by a gentleman connected with an extensive firm in Paternoster-row—a connexion of L——’s family, and who saw the young man frequently in his late illness.

being his last stake, with which he won two thousand pounds. Escaping from the apartment, he fell on his knees, exclaiming, in an impassioned manner, "Give me a Bible!" on which he took his oath never to play again. But the oath he kept not many months, for King afterwards became a member of the "*Miles*" club in St. James's-street, where he lost everything.

At the commencement of this year (1811) Ellis-ten had again broken fresh ground, in an entirely new project—namely, The establishment of a Literary Association at Bristol! In pursuance of which, he had purchased, for the sum of 1600*l.*, freehold premises in John-street. The house, which had formerly been an Italian warehouse, or in other words, a pickle-shop, he now opened for the sale of Italian anthology and Classical conserves.

The back apartment, which he styled "The Lyceum," was accordingly thrown open; to which the whole literary mind of Bristol was invited. This was well supplied by evidences of appropriate taste—an Apollo, some Etruscan vases, Patterson's Roads, reviews, magazines, and a world of tracts, pamphlets, and newspapers. The front room was a library, or shop for the sale of "old, choice, and rare books only." Here were no idle, sickly, pale-backed bantlings of the Minerva press—nothing of the *belle assemblée* of literature whatever. Like

Charles Lamb, the great projector had proclaimed Dryden and Pope as the last in the empire of letters, and the "choice old books" alone constituted his care. Amongst others, he had collected "Memoirs of the Duke de Ripperda;" "Sir Thomas Double at Court;" "Enquiries touching y^e Diursity of Langvages in all parts of the World;" "The Ladies' Perceptor, by a Gentleman of Honour, at Cambridge;" "The most famous, delectable, and pleasant History of Pirismvs, the renowned Prince of Bohemia;" "ΠΑΝΣΕΒΕΙΑ; or, a View of all Religions on the Earth;" "Scotiæ Indiculum; or, the Present State of Scotland, 1680;" "Chapman's Homer;" "The Ship of Fooles;" in high Dutch; and piles on piles of "Dramatic Mysteries;" to these were added a vast variety of shells, fossils, coins, Indian weapons, and a gong, which might have awakened from their very graves, a whole generation of Bristol by a single stroke.*

* We may here quote the words of a learned annotator on the Life and Character of the eccentric John Dunton, the bookseller, as applicable to our subject. "This dipper into a thousand books formed ten thousand projects, six hundred of which he appears to have thought he had completely methodized. But his mind seemed to be like some tables where the victuals have been ill sorted and worse dressed."

So, mutato nomine, we may apply to our own hero the epigrammatic lines of the time:—

"Here's *Elliston*, that new *dramatic* swain,
Who hatch'd six hundred projects in his brain;
The brood is large, but give him time to sit,
And he'll six hundred projects more beget."

Elliston, who never entered with indifference on any speculation, embarked in the book scheme with more than common enthusiasm. Repeatedly, as his other duties would permit, he personally peregrinated in the collection of antique literature, frequenting innumerable book-stalls, and rummaging the back parlours and store-closets of all the good wives he could call to memory. Like the magician, in "Aladdin," he journeyed from place to place, crying "New books for old ones;" and by the end of a month, he had collected poetry, like the Muse herself, stripped of covering; and antique bindings, on the other hand, which, like the frames of as many pictures, were "alone worth the money."

At the head of this establishment he placed a man by the name of Brick, a dilapidated schoolmaster, whose duty it was to superintend all that the great designer had brought into operation. Under these arrangements, the Institution for a time flourished. The old books accumulated amazingly; for, while few were read and none sold, Elliston contemplated his stock with that sublimity of feelings, estimating its value by a far higher standard than that of a scrivener or a commercial accountant. But the city of Bristol, alas, was no genial soil for the empire of letters! The frequenters of "The Lyceum" fell off—there were few returns of either persons or profit—the "Ben Jonson Head," over the door, ceased to be oracular;

and sundry outstanding demands induced our hero to think seriously of sending his literary bullion to the mint of public competition, and taking the current circulation in exchange.

But the time had now arrived, in which he received intelligence of the decisive blow of the Bristol affair. *Duns Scotus*, the shattered schoolmaster, had found time, during the latter two months, for ingratiating himself in the favour of a rope-maker's daughter, in the neighbourhood of John Street; a lady of easy manners and the same quality of virtue. Mr. Brick, like many literary men before him, was soon illaqueated by the flaxen beauty; and considering, perhaps, that if he did not find her a virtuous maiden, he could at least make her an honest woman, conferred on her the distinction of Mrs. Brick, the marriage being solemnized within a stone's cast of "The Lyceum" itself.

Within three days of these espousals, the history was brought to a conclusion—Mr. and Mrs. Brick had departed on a matrimonial tour, and "The Lyceum" desecrated by an irruption on the till. All was cleared, save the old choice books, for, like *Moses*, in the play, "he never meddled with them." The age of reason was no more, though the schoolmaster was emphatically abroad, and the Bristol associates returned once more to their wharfs.

Elliston's object was now, of course, to get rid of the troublesome concern as quickly as possible, but in this, alas! he found equal annoyance. The

title to his property, like that of many of his volumes, was found defective, under which difficulty considerable time was lost and no inconsiderable sums sacrificed.

But the spirit and intrepidity of Elliston rose superior to his fortune. Inactivity was to him that vacuum which nature abhors, or, like the "*old gentleman* in a gale of wind," excitement was his element.

A melo-dramatic piece was now in forwardness at the Surrey Theatre, for the purpose, in a great part, of producing two magnificent suits of armour, of the fourteenth century. Marriott of Fleet Street, undertook the execution of the work; his first estimate was 400*l.*, and two first-rate artisans were engaged at 12*l.* per week. Elliston, in that peculiar vein in which he looked on all his undertakings, bound Marriott under an agreement, not to employ himself in the construction of any other armour, except on Elliston's account, for a term of five years—the expense of the present undertaking not to exceed 700*l.* Marriott's bill, on the completion of the above, was as follows:—

Two suits of armour	£593	10	0
Embossing, &c.	12	12	0
Paid Cooper, for drawings	10	10	0
Incidental exps.	71	19	6
	688	11	6

Industry and enterprise now met with their full reward; for notwithstanding Elliston's great outlay by alterations, improvements, &c. in the theatre—new wardrobes, scenery &c., he received a net profit, at the conclusion of his second season of 3000*l*.

The Royal Circus (or Surrey Theatre) had attained, at this period, its highest celebrity, and as it may be curious to remark the rude foundations of this *Transtamesin* dynasty, we beg to offer the reader a brief notice. This theatre was built near the junction of the cross-road, on St. George's-fields, and opened in the year 1780, by the elder Dibdin and one Hughes, for the representation of burlettas and equestrian exercises. A spirited competition was here, for some time, maintained, with Philip Astley, proprietor of the Amphitheatre, in the Westminster-road; the Circus, in fact, stimulating Astley to add a stage and scenery to his riding circle.

The Circus was burnt down in 1805. The fate of the *Pegasus*, which surmounted the building, created as much interest during the conflagration, as the *Apollo* of Drury Lane on the “One dread night” of March, 1809.

The earliest advertisement we offer, is in that bitterness of spirit so peculiar to dramatic rivalry!

“ BRITISH HORSE ACADEMY, BLACKFRIARS-ROAD,

Sept. 1772.

“ The celebrated Sobieska Clementina and Mr. Hughes on Horseback, will end on Monday next, the 4th of October ; until then they will display the whole of their Performances, which are allowed, by those who know best, to be the completest of the kind in Europe. Hughes humbly thanks the Nobility, &c. for the Honour of their Support, and also acquaints them his Antagonist has caught a bad cold so near to Westminster-bridge, and for his Recovery is gone to a warmer Climate, which is Bath in Somersetshire. He boasts, poor Fellow, no more of activity, and is now turned Conjurer, in the character of ‘Sieur the Great.’ Therefore Hughes is unrivalled, and will perform his surprising Feats accordingly at his Horse Academy, until the above Day. The Doors to be opened at Four o’clock, and mounts at Half-past precisely. H. has a commodious Room, eighty feet long.

“ N.B. Sobieska rides on one, two, and three Horses, being the only one of her Sex that ever performed on one, two, and three.”

Hughes was a fine, stalworth fellow, who could have carried an ox away on his shoulders, and eaten him for supper. The next is equally a curiosity :—

“ Hughes has the honour to inform the Nobi-

lity, &c. that he has no intention of setting out every Day to France for three following Seasons, his Ambition being fully satisfied by the applause he has received from Foreign Gentlemen who come over the Sea to See him. Clementina and Miss Huntly ride one, two, and three Horses at full Speed, and takes Leaps surprising. A little Lady, only Eight Years old, rides Two Horses at full gallop, by herself, without the assistance of any one to hold her on. Enough to put any one in fits to see her. H. will engage to ride in Twenty Attitudes that never were before attempted ; in particular, he will introduce his Horse of Knowledge, being the only wise animal in the Metropolis. A Sailor in full gallop to Portsmouth, without a bit of Bridle or Saddle. The Maccaroni Tailor riding to Paris for new Fashions. This being Mr. Pottinger's night, he will speak a Prologue adapted to the noble art of Riding, and an Epilogue also suited to Extraordinary Leaps.

“ Tickets (2s.) to be had of Mr. Wheble, bookseller, Paternoster-row, and at H.'s Riding School. Mounts half-past four.”

Again :—

“ Hughes, with the celebrated Sobieska Clementina, the famous Miss Huntly, and an astonishing Young Gentleman (son of a Person of Quality) will exhibit at Blackfriars-road more extraordinary things than ever yet witnessed, such as leaping

over a Horse forty times without stopping between the Springs.—Leaps the Bar standing on the Saddle with his Back to the Horse’s Tail, and—*Vice Versa*, Rides at full speed with his right Foot on the Saddle and his left Toe in his Mouth, two surprising Feat. Mrs. Hughes takes a fly and fires a Pistol—rides at full speed standing on Pint Pots—mounts pot by pot, higher still, to the terror of all who see her. H. carries a lady at full speed over his head—surprising! The young gentleman will recite verses of his own making, and act ‘Mark Antony,’ between the leaps.”

“Clementina every night—a commodious room for the nobility.”

We will now take at random, a bill of Philip Astley, the despised of Hughes and Clementina, but the formidable rival to the Blackfriars’ establishment:—Hughes certainly had the advantage in orthography.

“ASTLEY’S, WESTMINSTER-BRIDGE, this and every evening. HORSEMANSHIP, by Mr. Astley, Mr. Taylor, Signor Markutchy, Miss Vangable, and other transcendent performers. This performance will be commenced by a new MINUET, danced by two Horses, in a most extraordinary manner.

“A Comical Musical Piece, called THE AWKWARD RECRUIT.

“The Amazing Exhibition of THE DANCING DOGS, from France and Italy, and other genteel

Parts of the globe, consisting of—1. Two Dogs as Chairmen, carrying a Monky to a Maskerade. 2. Two Dogs disputing poleticks. 3. A Company of Dogs carrying from a Vineyard, Baskits of Grapes, and accompanied by a Savoyard, with a Magic Lanton. 4. A Dog as a Lady of Quality in her Equipage, attended by others in elegant liveries. 5. A Dog cobbling. 6. A Dog that walks on any two of his Legs. 7. Two dogs, as a Tumbler, and his attendant Clown. 8. A Dog dressed in a Spanish habbit, taking another little dog to a Boarding-school ; with a variety of others too numerous for Insertion. This Exhibition will conclude with a Variety of Dogs dressed *in militaire*, beseeching a Town ; one of them represents a Corporal returning with the Colurs of the Citadel in his mouth to his General ; he halts on three Legs, being supposed to have received a muskit ball in one of his four-feet. Two Bull-Dogs ; the English Bull-Dog, rather than quit his hold, suffers himself to be drawn Thirty Feet high, whilst the Mashine is surrounded with Fire Works, representing a heavy Discharge of small Arms and Artillery.

“ TUMBLING, and other UNACCOUNTABLE EXERCISES, by Signor Bellmott.

“ To which will be added a New Pantomime, called HARLEQUIN PUZZLE’EM.”

In the meantime, Rowland Hill, like a holy crusader, hovered about the Saracenic armies of

the mighty Saladin, and St. George's-fields were again awakened to rescue the land from the infidels. The chapel being erected, the divine renewed his thunders against the playhouse. Sunday after Sunday he discoursed on the sinfulness of stage exhibitions—sometimes mentioning Elliston by name, and not unfrequently detailing the very plots of dramatic productions, with the view, no doubt, of more clearly illustrating the truth, and justifying the violence of his anathemas.

It was on one of these occasions that Rowland Hill repeated the following, from his well-known "Aphoristic Observations:"—"The Reverend James Harvey being one day on a journey, a lady, who happened to be in the same carriage with him, was expatiating in a very particular manner on the amusements of the stage, as being, in her esteem, superior to any other pleasures. Among other things, she said, there was the pleasure of thinking on the play before she went, the pleasure she enjoyed when there, and the pleasure of ruminating upon it when in her bed at night. Mr. Harvey, when she had concluded, said to her, in a mild manner, that there was one pleasure besides which she had entirely forgotten. 'What can that be?' said she, 'for sure I have included every pleasure, when I have considered the enjoyment beforehand, at the time, and afterwards. Pray, sir, what is it?' To which Mr. Harvey, with a grave look, and

in a manner peculiar to himself, answered, ‘Madam, the pleasure it will give you on your death-bed.’ A clap of thunder, or a flash of lightning, could not have struck her with more surprise—the blow pierced to her very heart, and *she never went any more to the playhouse, but became a pious woman for ever afterwards!*”

Hence, gloomy bigots vilify the stage,
And hand the libel down from age to age.

The two winter theatres, but more particularly Covent Garden, having extended their season so far into the summer, as to interfere materially with the operations of the Haymarket, the directors of the latter were compelled once again to attempt the experiment of an independent company. In pursuance of this, Elliston was the first person to whom they applied, for he was free of any engagement at either of the great houses, while his services at the Haymarket would become doubly beneficial to the proprietors of that establishment, by enriching them at the expense of a very formidable rival, namely, the Surrey. Elliston, therefore, made terms accordingly, which at this period of dramatic history, might have been accounted great—namely, forty pounds per week, with two clear benefits.*

* Betty (the Young Roscius) received one hundred guineas a night; and Old Roscius, according to Pliny, the value of five thousand pounds a year.

With these new forces the Haymarket marshals opened the campaign. Elliston led the attack by an Address written by Colman, which was backed by the whole strength of the “Honeymoon.” Within a short time, a new satirical piece partly taken from the Anti-Jacobins, entitled “The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburg,” was produced with considerable success, the object of which was to ridicule the prevailing taste (if so it might be called) for German sentiment, and expose the evil tendency of its indulgence. Reason, respectability, and decorum, had become a mere drug, and a picturesque misprision of moral obligations the only vendible piece of merchandize in the mental market. Poor common sense had scarcely a bidder—filial obedience and conjugal rights rotted on the shambles, and civil codes were positively pronounced deleterious.

This satirical drama had also the double purpose of lashing the horses, which had become unduly attractive at Covent Garden, whence some wits observed, the Green Room must have been originally a grass plot, and as to the wagon of Thespis, that clearly implied the *anteriority* of cattle.

We subjoin part of a poetic address spoken on the representation of the “Quadrupeds”—

“To lull the soul by spurious strokes of art,
To warp the genius and mislead the heart,

To make mankind respect wives gone astray,
 Love pious sons who rob on the highway;
 For this the German drama trod our stage,
 And stock'd our schools with its new-fangled page.

* * * *

Not yet recovered from these Rhenish quacks,
 We take an airing upon English hacks:
 While ev'ry ostler-bard may raise his name,
 If not to Pegasus, to stable fame."

The season of the winter theatres being brought to a close, the "*Independents*" were not above acquiring new strength from the national establishment. Holman, Mathews, Liston, Mrs. Glover, and Jones, had been engaged. Munden was now added to the Haymarket company, and made his appearance in the part of *Old Rapid*.

This was the first time Munden and Elliston had been brought together on the same boards, a concurrence highly beneficial to the interests of the theatre, and acceptable to the public. These two accomplished comedians soon understood each other, and gave ample refutation to the absurd notion, that an actor of merit displays to higher advantage by the side of inferior pretensions—an idle principle, which may possibly throw some artificial glare on the plated goods of inferior manufacture, but is by no means the assay of the solid bullion. Neither Munden nor Elliston had ever played with greater individual effects, and each acquired something in addition to his own

worth, by the manner in which his points were justified by the opposite party.

A piece of practical humour transpired at the commencement of this coalition, which we cannot forbear inserting.

In his impersonation of *Old Rapid*, (the tailor,) Munden invariably made his point, by quizzically unfolding a new coat on the back of a chair, smoothing it down with the pride of a satisfied artisan, and removing the papers, one by one, which enveloped the bright new buttons. This characteristic operation always produced a pleasant response in the audience, and as it was nothing by which comedy might be ashamed, Munden always made the most of it.

Elliston, who was confessedly what is called a fair actor, (never appropriating effects which did not belong to him,) on this evening, however, by one of his strange impulses, when Munden was engaged at the back of the scene, was seized by an irresistible *envie* for the buttons; and found himself, perhaps before he was aware, in the felonious assault upon Joe's pet joke, which he utterly annihilated, by uncasing the buttons to as much laughter in the pit, as had ever been the share of Munden himself.

The dismay, the bitter disappointment to poor Joe, can scarcely be conceived; his mortification

was childish, for tears came into his eyes. But this scene being over, a second was acted in the Green Room, to the merriment of another auditory, who were not quite past laughing at humorous results, themselves. Munden rushed into the apartment, passionately exclaiming, "Where is he?—where is he?—let me tear him in pieces—*who* is he?—*what* is he?—*where* does he come from? Bart'l'my Fair'—where is the jackanapes, I say!"

Elliston, who, like the trembling *Rizzio*, had flown to petticoat protection, crouching behind the ample folds of Mrs. Glover's white satin, now peeped out his head, which the irate comedian perceiving, fell on him with the most grotesque exhibitions of fury imaginable. Seizing him by the hair, Munden shook his curls, bien poudrés, "making the 'Green' one *white*;" calling him "an assassin," "a parricide," and a vast variety of terms, which did the highest credit to his imagination. Elliston roared lustily, but as some of the by-standers considered he had well-merited his punishment, and others were mightily amused with the scene, none came to his assistance; and after a little further quassation, the delinquent was suffered to escape.

About four days from this event, Munden and Elliston played together in the "Road to Ruin;" and at the conclusion of the third act, Munden again ran into the Green Room, crying out,

●

“Where is he?—where is he, I say? Hid him again, eh?” At the same time peeping in the rear of the surrounding ladies, and fantastically raising the flounces of their attire. “Bobby,” cried he, running up to Elliston—“Bobby, Bobby, I forgive you the buttons; you have made me to-night—immortalized yourself—I’ll never play with any *Harry Dorn-ton* but you, Bobby,” continued he, shaking him, on this occasion, by the *hand*. “You’ve beat ’em all—Holman, Lewis—all of ’em; but, Bobby,” pursued he, in a mock sententious tone, “don’t dash my buttons any more.”

Sir Claudius Hunter, the Lord Mayor elect, in his surpassing perceptions of the ceremonial for the ensuing 9th of November, made application to Elliston for the loan of his new armour, to assist in the civic pageant. The request was acceded to, but accompanied with a provision, that the steel armour could only be permitted, in the event of the atmosphere being free of damp and fog on the day in question; a condition which, at once, appeared to preclude all hope of the said steel. As to the brass suit, that was a perfectly unconditional favour, Mr. Kemble undertaking the personal superintendence of decorating the helmets with costly plumes.

Sundry newspaper paragraphs, at this time, announced, that at the approaching inauguration of

Sir Claudius, some of the royal armour, deposited in the Tower, would be brought into operation ; but not a word was vouchsafed on the liberality of Elliston, or any notice respecting his two matchless suits of brass and steel. Elliston felt the neglect ; but to his further surprise, the civic chrysalis observed to him, that it would be perhaps more advisable to state that Elliston had offered the use of his panoply for the 9th instant, rather than that so high a functionary as an Alderman of London, had made a request to the manager of a theatre. So that, here was a man, who first *begs a suit* of no ordinary character, and has then the assurance of begging likewise, it might appear the boon had been forced upon him ;—the very proposition itself might have afforded all the brass necessary to the occasion.

The following notice was at length determined on.—“ We understand Mr. Elliston has lent to the Lord Mayor elect, the two magnificent suits of armour—one of steel and the other of brass, manufactured by Marriott of Fleet-street, and which cost not less than six hundred pounds. These very curious specimens of the revival of an art supposed to have been lost, will be displayed in the Lord Mayor's procession, and afterwards in Guildhall, with some of the royal armour from the Tower.”

The 9th of November arrived. Fair was the morning, and bright the anticipations of the modern Walworth, as he contemplated the glittering array

which would presently become the gaze and admiration of the world of London.

“Some wore coat armour, imitating scale,
And next the skin were stubborn shirts of mail ;
Some wore a breast-plate, and a light jupon,
Their horses clad in rich caparison ;
Some for defence would leathern bucklers use
Of folded hides, and other shields of Puce ;
One hung a pole-axe on his saddle-bow,
And one a massive mace to fell the foe ;
One for his legs and knees provided well,
With jambeaux arm'd, and double plates of steel ;
This on his helmet wore a lady's glove,
And that a sleeve, embroidered by his love.”

Elliston was at this time in the country, and on the following day, an account of the one previous was thus announced to him :—

“ The unhandsome conduct of the Lord Mayor has occasioned me much trouble, and will give you equal displeasure. In the first place, your paragraph never would have appeared at all, had I not interfered in the matter ; secondly, cropped-tailed hacks had been procured, without housings, so that I was compelled to obtain two trumpeters' horses from the Horse Guards, long-tailed animals, and richly caparisoned ; thirdly, the helmets which had been delivered at Mr. Kemble's house, were not returned until twelve o'clock on the very day of action, with three miserable feathers in each, which appeared to have been plucked from the draggle tail of a hunted cock ; this I also remedied, at the last moment, by sending off to the first *plumasier*

for the hire of proper feathers, and the helmets were ultimately decorated with fourteen superb plumes; fourthly, the Lord Mayor's officer, who rode in the Henry V. armour, jealous of our stately aspect, attempted to seize one of our horses, on which, your rider made as gallant a retort as ever knight in armour could have done, and the assailer was completely foiled.

“ On the arrival of the *cortège* at Guildhall, we found that no accommodation had been arranged for your men, as Sir Claudius had promised, nor was a crumb of refreshment ordered for either of them. For seven hours they were kept within Guildhall, where they seem to have been considered as much removed from the necessities of the flesh, as Gog and Magog, above their heads. At length, from the compassion of some persons at table, Brass-armour was supplied with wine, which being in bumpers, and passing into an empty stomach, had a very positive effect on the inner man; and poor Brass-armour began to reel, at the hazard of his own bones and the very lives of his surrounding almoners, for he was—

‘ a thirsty soul,
Who took the challenge and embraced the bowl;
With gusto swilled the wine, nor ceased to draw,
Till he the bottom of the brimmer saw.’

“ As to Steel-armour, he was far more discreet refusing wine without corn, and moved solemnly about, like the ghost of Hamlet, in the very pre-

sence of *Claudius* himself ; and looking, doubtless, with anxiety, to the crowing of the cock, when he might ‘ render up himself.’ Brass, at length, became so very drunk, that it was found necessary to attempt his removal ; but being, verily, pot-valiant, he appeared most unequivocally to declare, ‘ *Nemo me impune lacessit*,’ for he placed himself in as good an attitude of defence as he could, and resolutely refused to budge an inch, which, as he was now totally unable to stand, he might very fairly have avowed. At length, however, the order of removal was enforced, and the degraded knight was conveyed to his place of settlement ; Steel brought up the rear, and, like a true lad of metal, strode to his fallen friend. Marriott was in attendance until past midnight, when the two half-dead bodies were released from their imprisonment, and Brass and Steel carried off to the manufacturer’s abode.”

Previous to the armour being restored to Elliston, Marriot’s house was accidentally consumed by fire. He thereupon wrote to Elliston, saying, that although he had lost by the burning, three thousand pounds, he should certainly construct for him a new suit of armour, at his own expense, for the one which had been destroyed. Marriott kept his word ; nor did Claudius or the city reimburse him one shilling.

Lucy Ann Theresa Elliston, born Dec. 21, 1811 ; died Jan. 28, 1831.

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Garrick — Her letter — A fracas — “Invisibline!” — Macklin’s son — Mrs. Charke — New Drury Lane Theatre — Cost of the building — Opening addresses — Ugly dogs — Lord Byron — Lord Holland — His Letter — The theatre is opened — Curious anecdote — Mrs. Bland — “Pentronculus” — Observations thereon — Elliston’s characters.

MRS. GARRICK (the widow of our British Roscius) had frequently honoured Mrs. Elliston by marks of attention, and expressed herself warmly interested in the welfare of her family. The friendship of Mrs. Garrick was not confined to these professions alone : for now, in her eighty-eighth year, she would occasionally drive to Stratford-place, personally to delight the young Ellistons by some agreeable surprise or well-timed present. It was at this period, a request was made to her, on the part of Elliston, that she would become sponsor to one of his children, Lucy ; to which the following letter was written in reply :—

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I cannot withhold expressing to you my feelings on the receipt of your letter ;

and you must believe me when I say, the contents have equally distressed and gratified me. My regard for Mrs. Elliston, yourself, and family, would at once have caused me sensations of pleasure in a proposal to bring us more nearly connected than we have been ; but, my dear friend, the refusal which I am compelled to send you, for becoming godmother to your child, arises from a sense of duty, which I am sure you will respect, and freely release me from all charge of insincerity in my professions towards you.

“ In the course of the happy days I passed with my revered, departed husband, comprehending, as you know, thirty years, the question of baptismal surety occasionally became a subject of his notice (for he had frequently been invited to an honour similar to this which I have received from you), and having strong feelings on the spirit and intent of this Christian institution, declined that as a distinction or gratification, which he felt he might not be able to fulfil as a moral and religious duty. This conviction he duly impressed on me ; and it is, indeed, in compliance with his own request, I am now led to forego your proposal, from the knowledge that I am already placed beyond the possibility—even if God be pleased to spare my life a few years longer—of acquitting my conscience in the responsibilities I should bring upon it through my consent.

“ Baptism is a holy sacrament of the church of Christ, which, in the engagements of all parties therein concerned, should be religiously remembered and observed ; but I fear, with one half the world, the office of sponsor to a Christian infant is looked upon in no graver light than as a piece of fashion.

“ Your children will not want the regards of a warm friend, so long as I may be spared ; and I trust, my dear friend, in your proper anxiety to protect them according to this ordinance of the church, you will ever remember the moral well-being of children must depend materially on the example of parents, and that God will bless you with his grace to fulfil this to his express will.

“ I am, yours faithfully,

E. M. Garrick

“ Adelphi, March 21, 1812.”

Eva Maria Garrick was born at Vienna, 1725 ; her maiden name was Viegel ; “ Violette,” she assumed, whilst in the service of the Empress Maria Theresa. Violette, on her arrival in England, was highly patronised by the Countess of Burlington ; as a dancer, she was in equal favour at the Opera-house. On Violette’s marriage with David Garrick, the earl presented her with a portion of 6000*l.* ; this fact gave rise to a suspicion

that she was a natural daughter of the earl's—a belief not altogether abandoned to this day. Mrs. Garrick died in 1822, in her 98th year. She was placed in the same vault with her husband, in Westminster Abbey.

In September, Elliston was again distinguished by one of those collusive differences of opinion (by which “The Noble Art of Self-Defence” is so characteristically understood) with his old playmate, De Camp. That Elliston should take a box in his own theatre, was at least reasonable—that De Camp, his officer, should participate the same, by no means extraordinary; and that the Surrey should afford “a clear stage and no favour,” was only that which a meritorious management should promote. But we fear our own colouring will stand no comparison with the more distinct lights and shadows of the real picture, and that the black eye of one comedian, and purple nose of the other, will demand satisfaction in plainer terms. We beg therefore to insert a copy of a letter addressed to the *Morning Chronicle*, by Sam Russell, on the 15th of the same month.

“SIR,—I perceive by your paper of this morning, that some good-natured friend has furnished you with an allusion to a *fracas*, which took place at this theatre a week ago, between Mr. Elliston

and Mr. De Camp, in such a form as grossly to misrepresent the circumstances. As I have been referred to, I think it right, in justice to myself, as well as to Mr. Elliston and Mr. De Camp, to say that it is true, dissension did occur in the theatre, on the evening of Tuesday, the 8th, in which some hasty expressions were used on both sides, and which *for a single moment* did occasion a slight personal encounter. The effect of this was a meeting, the next morning, on Dulwich Common, where Mr. Elliston was accompanied by myself, and Mr. De Camp by one of his friends. Mr. Elliston and Mr. De Camp exchanged shots, when, on the interposition of Mr. De Camp's friend and myself, the parties were prevailed on to shake hands. And thus the matter ended.

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ SAM. F. RUSSELL.”

On the above subject “ Invisiblina ” admonishes our hero. Her spirit appears to have been greatly moved ; and, in wonted mystery enthroned, she thus pours out the vials of her wrath :—

“ So ! you've been fighting—admirable !—that short antiseptic which many a rake-hell has adopted to sweeten his offensive reputation. Your credit shattered, you take the benefit of an act of violence, and are turned out again with a clean sheet. Alas !

alas ! in sober sadness (a sadness I fear you are but little acquainted with) I view you in your new character—emulous of your illustrious predecessors, Quin, Ryan, and Walker—a duellist ! The declaration of the Great Frederick has ever pleased me : ‘ My subjects may fight if they like it, but unless one of the parties be killed, I’ll hang both.’ If such were our English law, we should have few of these mock heroics to salve rotten reputations. How easy it is to become a hero, and you have taken the shortest cut. How will admiring crowds flock now to Dulwich Common, to view the spot on which this *Paris* and *Menelaus* contended ; then will they say—

‘ Can none remember that eventful day—
That ever-glorious, almost fatal fray—
When *Vincent’s** leadless pistol met his eye,
And *Surrey columbines* stood laughing by ?’

“ With what open arms the good people at Cheltenham must have received you after this exploit ; and how sunny must be the face of a gentleman who has *just received satisfaction* ! Pray let us have no more of these scenes—the town is already laughing at you, from May Fair to Redriff.

“ Your wife will receive this day some brawn ; and the little Christian a token of ‘ Invisiblina’s ’ regard. Let the opening of Drury Lane Theatre be your great chance to come.”

* De Camp.

There is an anecdote recorded of a son of Macklin, who, when in India, fell into quarrel with a brother cadet, the result of which was a hostile meeting. When Macklin came on the ground, he appeared enveloped from top to toe in a large great-coat, so that no part of his figure could be distinguished but his head. On the parties taking their stand, Macklin, to the surprise of all, threw aside his extensive wrapper, and appeared in a perfect state of nudity, with the exception of a pair of yellow slippers. To the inquiries of his antagonist, he observed, "I am told that most of the wounds which prove mortal in India, arise from some part of the woollen or linen of a man's dress being forced into the flesh by the ball, occasioning in that climate a speedy mortification—to avoid which I am determined to fight in the manner you see me."

Now, Mrs. Charke, the eccentric daughter of Colley Cibber, was guilty of an adventure still more outrageous, in which (not to alarm the reader) we will at once premise, that although she appeared without her own attire, she had very abundantly borrowed that of another person. Mrs. Charke had long lived on unpleasant terms with her father, by whom she was treated with just severity for her total disregard of all social duties and common decorum. Being on one occasion greatly irritated by the dramatist's refusal to honour her drafts, she

equipped herself after the style of a gentleman of the road, and hiring a suitable charger, actually waylaid her father upon Epping Forest, by stopping his chariot, presenting her pistol, and desiring him to deliver. The affrighted comedian, to save his life, could do no less than part with his purse. "Young man—young man," said the dramatist, "this is a sorry trade ; take heed in time !"

"And so I would," replied Charlotte ; "but I've a wicked old hunk of a father, who rolls in money and mistresses, yet denies me a guinea, and has had the impudence to make so worthy a gentleman as yourself answer for it."*

On one of the pantomime nights, at the Surrey in this season, the harlequin, in jumping through a window, fell with considerable violence on the other side of the scene, owing to the neglect of the carpenter, in not having placed the wadded bedding to receive him. The unhappy pantomimist uttered a tremendous cry, but was not materially injured. On Elliston being apprised of the circumstance, he observed, "Ay, there was much cry, and little *wool*."

By the enterprise and perseverance of Mr. Whitbread, the new Drury Lane Theatre, in the spring of 1812, was announced complete. The grand

* The above was not quite an original exploit—Doll Cutpurse robbed the celebrated General Fairfax on Hounslow Heath.

movement was now making for opening this splendid edifice for dramatic action, and rehearsing those antique glories, by which the site had still remained memorable, amidst the ruins which had lately surrounded. The sum subscribed for the re-erection of the theatre, was 400,000*l.*, out of which 40,000*l.* was applied to the purchase of the old interest—viz., 20,000*l.* to Sheridan, and the other moiety in equal portions, between Mrs. Linley, Mrs. Richardson, and T. Sheridan. The old renters, and other creditors, accepted 25 per cent. in full of their respective demands, and the Duke of Bedford released the property of his claim, amounting to 12,000*l.* The remainder of the sum subscribed was deemed sufficient to the completion of the undertaking.

Mr. Richard Wilson, of whom we have before had occasion to speak, proposed to the committee a rent of 20,000*l.* per annum, and to take a lease jointly with Elliston, for a term of twenty-one years. The offer, however, was declined.

Arnold being now appointed to the management, Elliston signed articles with the proprietors for five years' service, determinable at their option at the end of the third year, at 30*l.* per week for three nights' performances, and 5*l.* nightly for any extra service.

In August, the committee announced, by advertisement, that the authorship of the poetic Address

to be spoken on the restoration of the theatre, was open to public competition. This declaration gave rise to the celebrated publication of the "Rejected Addresses," one of the happiest efforts of its precise nature, which has ever perhaps appeared, and likely to enjoy the favour of posterity equally with "the only true and particular" composition, by which the play-going public were welcomed for nine consecutive nights.

Upwards of one hundred sealed Addresses were forwarded to the dread "*Sorbonne*" of the Drury Committee, of which "*sunt bona, sunt quædam mediocria, sunt mala plura,*" and not a few of the number, as may well be imagined, attracted notice after a fashion somewhat different to the secret promptings of the respective bards, and like the tinker's terrier, have owed their preservation to being the "ugliest dogs" in the whole country. Some examples of the litter we have seen; one or two we beg here to offer. The first ugly dog ran after this manner:—

" A new theatre in quite a modern style,
 Beautifully finish'd—a stupendous pile,
 In a short time uprears its lofty crest,
 Just like a burnt-out Phœnix from its nest;
 Where loyalty once more shall raise its voice,
 All that can make a British heart rejoice.
 Here the proud Corsican shall quickly know
 The fortune which shall humble England's foe;
 Here shall he find the battles all recast—
 Blenheim to Salamanca—July last.

For 'tis the drama's duty to inspire
 Britannia's sons with patriotic fire.
 To Whitbread thanks, and noble Holland too,
 For bringing all this beauteous scene to view ;
 Raising a temple where but yesterday
 All was a mass of smoking stones and clay,
 Shewing so much of industry and skill,
 And what the English can do if they will.”

This composition was spun to above eighty lines.
 We will now pull out another cur by the ears :—

“ Once more we meet you—meet you once again,
 Patrons and good old friends, in Drury Lane ;
 Once more in spite of all the fates can do,
 Welcome a British audience—you—you—you !
 But, oh ! my thoughts are driven to recall
 That fearful night, which you remember all,
 When furious flames assail'd these hallow'd beams,
 And sent their fury in ten thousand streams ;
 When you, good citizens, with aspect dire,
 Shouted through London—“ Drury is on fire ! ”
 And pallid consternation held the town,
 From the mechanic upwards to the crown.

Such, for a moment, must we all retrace,
 Whilst I address you from the self-same place,
 The very spot the element controll'd,
 And where the mighty fabric toppling roll'd ;
 While tears which follow'd only served to swell
 The red devourer which they could not quell ;
 Such having claim'd our sympathetic sigh,
 Forget what's past, and wipe the weeping eye.”

Thus we see the same ridiculous and blind affection, which made the ape, in the fable, produce her young one, when a decree had been published amongst the beasts, that the most beautiful offspring should become their king.

So much for the “ugly dogs,” and we really know not that, amongst the whole pack (100 copies), there was a single pet, beauty, or real “King Charles” worthy perpetuating the Merry Monarch’s patent for old Drury; or, in other words, a single address deserving the great occasion; but of this we are quite convinced, that it was intended, from the very first, that Lord Byron should be ultimately fixed on for the part, though Petrarch’s crown had been so ostentatiously declared the inheritance of “him who was most worthy.” Lord Holland managed the affair—a management more adroit than many which followed beneath the same roof.

Under, what was called, an emergency, Lord Byron was applied to for an address. The following is one of many letters, which the poet addressed to Lord Holland on the subject:—

“Sept. 27, 1812.

“I have just received your very kind letter, and hope you have met with a second copy corrected and addressed to Holland House. As to remarks, I can only say, I will alter and acquiesce in anything. With regard to the part which Whitbread wishes to omit, I believe the Address will go off *quicker* without it, though, like the agility of the Hottentot, at the expense of its vigour. I should like Elliston to have it, with your leave.

“As there will probably be an outcry amongst

the rejected, I hope the committee will testify that I sent in nothing to the congress whatever, with or without name, as your lordship well knows. All I have to do with it is, with and through you; and though I, of course, wish to satisfy the audience, I do assure you, my first object is to comply with your request, and in so doing to shew the sense I have of the many obligations you have conferred upon me. Yours ever,



“The Address,” by Lord Byron, is well known to most of our readers. A copy was forthwith forwarded to Elliston for study; some days subsequent to which, he received the annexed from Lord Holland:—

“DEAR SIR,—I have referred to Lord Byron’s copy, and find it agrees with my notions respecting the lines, and with great deference to Walker, it should be so. Would you begin your *Hamlet* soliloquy with—‘*Either* to be, or not to be?’ There can be no question in the matter. The fact is, these grammarians hand down rules from other languages, or from their own theories, and then endeavour to reduce our English tongue to their own arbitrary standard, instead of making good idiomatic writers their rule.

“ It has occurred to me, that by repeating the 22nd and 23rd lines, a little more rapidly than you did this morning, you will relieve the passage somewhat of its solemnity, which, though striking and poetical, might be felt monotonous.

“ But you will judge of this matter better than I can, and I only make the suggestion for the purpose of shewing you how little fault I can find with your recital. I am, dear sir, your humble servant,

Vassall Holland

On the day preceding the opening, came another note :—

“ DEAR SIR,—I have just received a letter from Lord Byron, and he is anxious, should it not be too late, that you should repeat the lines after ‘ Brinsley cease to write,’ as thus altered :—

‘ Heirs to their labours, like all high-born heirs,
Vain of our ancestry as well as theirs,
While thus remembrance borrows *Banquo’s* glass,
To claim the sceptred shadows as they pass ;
And we, the mirror hold, where, imaged, shine
Immortal names, emblazon’d in our line,
Pause, &c.’

“ The alteration is so trifling, that although it reaches you at this late hour, I trust it will not embarrass you. Your humble servant,

“ VASSALL HOLLAND.”

Whitbread had also, at a "late hour," cut out of the address the passage which Lord Byron denominated his "cavalry lines," these being a fling against the horses, at this time unduly attractive at the rival house, Covent Garden; and several members of the committee, also desirous of claiming some little suggestion as their own, all persecuted poor Elliston with trifling alterations, so that his embarrassment might have been well forgiven, had it really taken place. The alteration suggested through Lord Holland, was the form in which the address was subsequently published.*

On the 10th of October, the new theatre in Drury Lane was opened with the tragedy of "Hamlet"—*Hamlet* by Elliston, and the "Devil to Pay"—preceded by Lord Byron's occasional Address. The receipts amounted to 842*l.* 12*s.*, and the sum of the first six nights 354*l.* 14*s.*; an average of 580*l.* per night.†

* Amongst the competitors for the prize Address, we find Wm. T. Fitzgerald, Ch. Masterman, Mary Russell Mitford, G. F. Busby, George Lamb, John Taylor, Joseph Hume, H. Jameson, Paul Jodrell, Horatio Smith, Wm. Linley, Ch. Brinsley Sheridan, J. Edwards, (a sign-painter who afterwards turned actor,) and Wm. Burton, (another painter and glazier,) &c.

† The following is a list of the Drury Lane Company at this period:—Mesdames Jordan, Mountain, Bland, Glover, Edwin, Dickons, Sparkes, Orger, Horne; Misses Smith, Duncan, Bew, Kelly, &c., &c.; Messrs. Elliston, Bannister, Wroughton, Pope, Raymoud, Johnstone, Dowton, Oxberry, Lovegrove, Knight,

A somewhat singular occurrence took place, on a certain night of this season, in which Mrs. Bland, the justly admired ballad songstress, bore a principal part. Mrs. Bland had ordered a hackney-coach to be in readiness at the stage-door of Drury Lane Theatre, to convey her home, at the close of the evening's entertainment, at about midnight. In she got, and the vehicle was forthwith on its journey. After some considerable time, Mrs. Bland felt astonishment at the course the horses were making, being in a contrary direction to her place of residence, through a variety of streets, and occasionally retracing the line they had first taken. She pulled the check-string, but to no purpose—the driver heeded her not. She now became alarmed, under the apprehension that the man was drunk, and some serious accident might ensue. One or two efforts more she made to arrest the circuitous progress of her charioteer, but with equal ill success.

Being now thoroughly terrified, Mrs. Bland let down the glass, and lustily cried aloud for help. The nature of her distress, very naturally, raised a variety of surmises amongst many who were witnesses to her exclamations, and sundry "ribald jests" were passed on her lamentations,

Pearson, Powell, Holland, Wallack, Phillips, Rae, Decamp, G. Smith, Kirby, Pyne, Marshall, Horne, Barnes, Bellamy, and Mr. Arnold, the manager.

by those who fancied our little singer was merely in company with too lively a companion.

At length, however, the horses were stopped, and on further examination of the case, it was discovered, that the poor driver had died upon his box. The man was still in a crouching posture, but life perfectly extinct. This event occasioned Mrs. Bland much disquiet and considerable trouble, as an inquest was consequently the result, at which it was necessary she should give evidence.

Mrs. Bland was deservedly a permanent favourite with the public—the best English ballad-singer on the stage. Her popularity rested solely on her professional merits, for we may perhaps be excused in saying, that personal attractions had little to do with her success, and whatever patronage she had, she fairly won.

Mrs. Bland's maiden name was Romanzini. She appeared first, we believe, at Liverpool, about the year 1789. She was a Jewess. Miss Romanzini was a great favourite with the Liverpool people, amongst whom were many Roman Catholics; and the mother of our vocalist, for the purpose of persuading the inhabitants of Liverpool that her daughter was not of Judah, compelled her to sit at her open window on every Saturday, occupied in needle-work; and, in addition to this, she was usually sent by the politic parent, into the public

market to buy a pig, and was compelled to carry it home herself, to give further confirmation as to this desirable point. To such an extent did the mother employ this sort of evidence, that in the instance of her daughter taking a benefit, an advertisement announced that tickets were to be had at Miss Romanzini's residence, and also at a pork-butcher's, near the market.

Lord Byron's apprehension of "an outcry amongst the rejected" appears to have been very shrewdly entertained. An outcry did take place in various directions, expressed through the means of the public journals, either complaining of partiality in the tribunal of Drury Lane, or accusing the committee of "a job," as respected Lord Byron. The clamour then raised, attended by much caustic criticism on the address which had been delivered, produced the following appeal from the conclave of the Drury committee. We offer a copy from the very original, in our possession, of the published letter :

"SIR,—It is necessary to correct some misstatements respecting the address spoken at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre.

"No pecuniary reward was ever offered.

"Lord Byron's prologue was not among those submitted to the committee before the 10th of Septem-

ber last. It was not till those so submitted had been examined and judged unfit by the persons to whom the decision was referred, that Lord Byron was *requested* to furnish the address which has been spoken with so much success and criticised with so much acrimony. Lord Byron entered into competition with nobody. When *requested* to write an address, he liberally undertook that difficult task, and executed it in a manner gratifying to the managers and, I firmly believe, satisfactory to the public. The committee acknowledged considerable merit in some of the rejected addresses, and have recorded, in a resolution, their favourable opinion of two. On such as arrived too late to be accepted—viz., after the time specified and subsequent to the application made to Lord Byron—they expressed no opinion.

“These, Sir, are facts on which you may depend ; and, in my judgment, neither the noble author nor the managers have reason to blush at the result. The scheme of competition failed. Recourse was had to a writer whose poetical reputation stands justly high, and a work was produced which, with some imperfections, is nevertheless remarkable for more novelty, as well as poetry, than could reasonably have been expected in so hackneyed a theme.

“A candid consideration of the difficulties the writer had to encounter, and a fair review of the beauties the address really possesses, will place

Lord Byron's merit in this composition, at no great distance from the most successful of his predecessors ; and with respect to his contemporaries, the few specimens of rejected addresses which we have hitherto seen, have gone far indeed to prove the committee correct in their judgment, when they pronounced what was submitted to them, *altogether unfit to be spoken at the opening of the theatre.*

“These disappointed writers have it, however, still in their power to adopt the generous example of Dr. Milbourne, recently sanctioned by Dr. Busby's imitation, and to publish their own compositions. Such an appeal to the public may possibly reconcile the most fastidious to the address which was spoken, and till it has been made, all censure on the committee for their condemnation of the works submitted to them, must be founded on conjecture only—*Carpere vel noli nostra, vel ede tua.*

“ I am, Sir,

*Your last true reader—
Petronius —*

On submitting a fac-simile of the signature to the original draft of the above, which we have in our possession, we leave to our readers their sur-

mises respecting the real writer. It was stated at the time, as drawn up by one of the leading members of the committee, which is sufficiently apparent, and, in our own minds, we have as little doubt as to his identity.*

During this season Elliston played most of his first comedy parts, and acted throughout with remarkable spirit and success; amongst them, *Benedick*—*Don Felix*—*Archer*—*Young Mirabel*—*Leon*—*Mercutio*—*Don Alonzo*, in Coleridge's play, "The Remorse"—*Valentine*, "Love for Love"—*Joseph*, "School for Scandal," for the first time.

* "Soon after the 'Rejected Addresses' scene, in 1812, I met Sheridan. In the course of dinner, he said, 'Lord Byron, did you know that amongst the writers of addresses, was Whitbread himself?' I answered by an inquiry of what sort of an address he had made. 'Of that,' replied Sheridan, 'I remember little, except that there was a phoenix in it.' 'A phoenix! well, how did he describe it?' 'Like a *poulterer*,' answered Sheridan, 'it was green and yellow, and red, and blue—he did not let us off for a single feather.'—*Byron's Letters*, 1821.

CHAPTER IV.

The eccentric Philip Astley—Wych Street Theatre—Its curious history—Astley's adventures—The horse "Billy"—Abraham Saunders—"Little Drury Lane Theatre"—The Dublin Theatre—Mr. Farren, Miss O'Neil—The Edinburgh Theatre—The Birmingham Theatre—The Lord Chamberlain's decision—"A Card!"—*Jack* Taylor—His letter—Edmund Kean—His first letter—His second letter—His third letter—Elliston rejoins—Kean's dilemma—"Violino obligato"—A mystery—"Deeper and deeper still"—An inscrutable manager—A practical joke—The result.

ABOUT this time, the eccentric Philip Astley, finding his Olympic Pavilion, in Wych-street, not quite the profitable concern it had previously been, felt a strong inclination for its disposal; and well knowing Elliston's omnivorous appetite for this species of prey, he contrived, in a circuitous manner (truly characteristic of an amphitheatrical), that the intelligence should reach the ears of our enterprising comedian. Elliston snapped at the bait presently—"The very thing for me!" cried he—"so near to Drury! Such a family *circle*! I'll set about it directly."

Straightway, on the very morning of his information, Elliston was under the lintel of Hercules'

Hall, the seat of the redoubtable equestrian, and at once made known to him the nature of his business. "Father Philip," with well counterfeited surprise, listened to the suitor's proposal; and in the language of a fond parent, replied that, as he was certainly descending into the vale of years, he had felt a natural anxiety for seeing his child well settled before he died, and should not therefore be deaf to any honourable offer which might be made for the hand of his little pet, "for it is verily my own flesh and blood," added he—an observation well applied, for the pretty *Witch* was, in point of fact, the very offspring of Philip's labour, the theatre having been literally built with his own hands.

The history is curious.

In 1805, Lord Craven granted a lease to Astley of a piece of ground in Wych-street, which had been cleared, by the removal of some old tenements, not of the most reputable character, for a term of sixty-one years, at an annual rent of 100*l.* On this spot a theatre was to be erected, and a sum not less than 2500*l.* to be expended, with other covenants.

The spot of ground so granted, was the most unshaped and unshapable *pied a terre* which can be imagined—an area as irregular as the practices which had lately distinguished it. In this space, however, the geometric Amphi-Philip proposed to describe a circle; for which purpose he collected about him a variety of workmen from a neighbouring public-house,

(which, by-the-bye, happened to be "The Compasses,") and immediately set to business.

Some old naval prizes being at this time on sale, Philip purchased the timber of what he called the "Wheel de Parrey," which being designed for the exercise of his horses, was perhaps no inapposite accentuation; and with the masts, yards, and bowsprit of the shattered Frenchman, he formed the main props and support of his new play-house; evidence of which is to this day discernible in the rear of the boxes of the Olympic Theatre. Here, Philip, in his one-horse chaise, which was constructed closely, to fit the rotundity of his person, sat, day after day, like a prebendary in his stall, giving directions to his operatives around him, who carried on the process of the building. The brick-work was very trifling, the limbs of the *Wheel de Parrey* being principally pressed into this new service, clothed in tin and tarpauling, and bearing tiers of boxes from the identical joints which once carried tiers of guns.

Through favour of her Majesty, Astley obtained a licence for music, dancing, burlettas, pantomime, and equestrian exhibitions; this privilege being mainly granted for the purpose of enabling him to keep his horses during the winter. The licence, which had only been requested for the term between Michaelmas and Easter, was, in point of fact, made out for the whole year, and was so continued; so that, in

September, 1806, when the indefatigable Philip was ready for opening, he found himself somewhat unexpectedly in possession of a valuable tenure.

Thus, in the course of a short time, a tolerable theatre was erected. The audience part consisted of one tier of boxes, a pit, which surrounded the ride, at the back of which, a space, denominated a gallery, was parted off by an iron grating, through which the crowd, like the untamed animals in Cross's menagerie, caught what they could, which was little enough. Here was no orchestra, but a small, divided band of musicians occupied the stage-boxes, on each side of the house, and appeared very like one royal party fiddling at the other.

Astley, in his negotiation with Elliston, pronounced that he had covered two thousand feet of ground; that he had extensive frontage in Wych-street, Maypole-alley, Craven-passage, &c., &c., and that on this unequal undecagon, which he fairly denominated "unparalleled," he had laid out 8000*l*. On the 18th of March, Philip Astley assigned his interest to Elliston for 2800*l*., and an annuity of 20*l*., so long as he should procure for the new purchaser a renewal of the licence.

Philip Astley (1803) had also a riding-school in Paris, since known as Franconi's. Not being allowed to quit Paris, he applied to the minister of the interior for leave to go to Piedmont

in consequence of ill health. He thereupon proceeded leisurely to Frankfort on the Maine where he heard of the death of his wife, which made him the more seriously reflect on his captivity.

He determined now at all hazards to make an effort to return to his native country, and, embarking on board a boat on the Maine, he took the first opportunity of proceeding towards the Rhine, and presently found himself in the Prussian territory of Westphalia; from thence he continued his route through the northern countries, and at length reached the place of his embarkation. While here, felicitating himself on his near approach to his home, the news arrived of the disastrous conflagration, which had destroyed his theatre at Westminster Bridge, on the 17th August.

A short time after his arrival, Astley laid the first stone of a new theatre. In addressing the visitors on that occasion, he said, that the loss was beyond all calculation, and which was the more felt, being so soon followed by the seizure of his estates in a neighbouring kingdom, in consequence of a decree for the confiscation of British property. In 1814, he returned to Paris, where he died in his 72nd year, and was buried in the cemetery of Père la Chaise.

Philip Astley was unquestionably the best horse tamer of his time. When in want of a horse he would go to Smithfield, and, relying on his judg-

ment, purchase three, four, or five, to his liking. He seldom gave more than five pounds for each. He cared little for shape, make, or colour; temper was his only consideration. It was one of these five-pounders that brought him more than any other of his whole stud: the horse would take a kettle off a blazing fire, deliberately set the tea-table, and prepare for company. He was so good-tempered an animal, that every one was fond of him. He would play like a kitten with those he knew. There was not a person in the establishment who was not partial to *Billy*.

Saunders, of *Fair* notoriety, had been brought up by old Astley, who had a great regard for him, and occasionally lent him a nag. Saunders on one occasion, coaxed the old gentleman to lend his favourite *Billy* for a few weeks; but Saunders, who was always in difficulties, during that period had the whole stud seized, and *Billy* with the rest was sold to the best bidder. Saunders was now boxed in the Fleet, and all trace of poor Billy was lost. Three years had now passed away, when Crossman and another of Astley's riders, were threading a street at the East end of London, and the following scene took place:—

"I say, Jack, I'm a Dutchman, if there isn't our Billy."

"Vy, where?"

"Vy, there, in that 'ere cart."

"Impossible!"

“ I tell you 'tis him, and I'll bet you a tanner of it. And I'm a Dutchman, but I'll try him.”

Now, Astley had always taught his horses by signs, and one was, clicking the nail of the fore-finger and thumb together ; this they no sooner did, than Billy obeyed the signal, pricked up his ears ; capered and curvetted in token of delight in meeting with old friends. They caressed their old acquaintance, who seemed as happy as themselves. The men now found the owner at an adjoining public house, offered to purchase the horse, which he agreed to, “ for,” said he, “ he is a monstrous good-tempered creature, but sometimes he has such odd capers, that we calls him ‘ Mountebank.’ ” The bargain was struck, and Billy that night returned to his old quarters, and was received by his venerable master with tears of joy. The next Monday he took the tea-kettle off the fire, and continued to perform his tricks for some time, and died at a good old age.

Abraham Saunders was almost as great a character as his master. He was well known to the public as a rider and showman for nearly three quarters of a century. He experienced all the vicissitudes of an itinerant exhibitor ; sometimes in the most prosperous circumstances, but more frequently in the greatest distress.

When George the Fourth went to Dublin, Abraham Saunders was entrusted with the care of the

Hanoverian horses. During his absence, the Royalty Theatre was burnt down, by which he sustained considerable loss. His whole troop of horses—fifteen in number, perished in the Irish seas, the vessel being wrecked in a dreadful storm.

In his several speculations, poor Abraham was unfortunate; eventually he was reduced to great poverty, and procured a precarious subsistence by penny exhibitions; but even these he was compelled to give up. He was brought before a magistrate, at Worship Street Office, for being the proprietor and director of a penny-theatre at Haggerstone; the poor old man, (for he had then entered his 90th year,) came to the office in a sort of little box on wheels, drawn by a Shetland pony, himself enclosed in a bear-skin dress. He died at his apartments, in Mill Street, Lambeth Walk, being in his 92nd year.

Elliston soon collected a company,* and on Easter Monday, 19th of April, 1813, the Olympic Pavilion, under the title of “*Little Drury-lane Theatre*,” was opened by him. In the following May the house was abruptly closed, by order of the Lord Chamberlain, as will be seen hereafter.

Elliston's new acquisitions were but fresh

* When Wewitzer was appointed manager of the Royalty (1790), during Palmer's difficulties, he advertised for unemployed actors, and received letters from *seven hundred persons*!

temptations to his “ vaulting ambition.” Our truly dramatic Napoleon appeared scheming a Confederation of the Stage, for scarcely had he annexed the Olympic to his sway, than he was actually in treaty for the Dublin, the Edinburgh, and Birmingham theatres!—the last of which he finally secured.

Mr. Phipps, being at this time in Dublin, writes to him:—

“ Jones, the proprietor of the theatre in this city, on finding you had purchased the Olympic in London, and hearing—like ‘ a wholesale dealer’—you were still in negotiation for playhouses by the gross, requests me to announce to you that he is willing to part with his interest in the Crow-street theatre, and that it would be by far the richest jewel in your managerial coronet. In the first place, Jones, by virtue of his patenteeship, is deputy-master of the revels in Dublin, and licences his own pieces; a distinction which the dramatic monopoly of England itself would not confer on you in that country. He believes there is but one man fitted to succeed to his palmy state—namely, yourself; and were it not that my advice to you would be to have nothing to do with the business, I should think so, too. His interest in the concern is to the extent of three-fourths, for which he demands thirty thousand guineas; and though Jones himself fancies this is hardly enough for the property, you will deem it more than so for the subject.

“ Conway has a good share of popularity here, particularly amongst the women ; and where they go, the men of Dublin are very apt to be found. His height is six feet two inches, an evident consciousness of which, gives him an ungain inclination of body, which, without diminishing the outline, disparages his manly presence. In acting, he is artificial and extravagant. He appears to imitate Young, but his tones are sepulchral rather than harmonious ; and by an endeavour to throw expression into his countenance, which is really handsome, he *wofully* distorts his features.

“ Of low comedians, we have a Mr. William Farren, who has a great flavour of originality. He is already a good actor ; but he has a hardness of style which yet keeps him in the rear of Munden ; and the only term perhaps which could be used in dissent from Farren would be, that Munden is better.

“ We have also a Miss O'Neil, who bears the greatest promise. She is most deservedly a high favourite with the Dublin audience. Her line is tragedy and leading comedy. Her performance, the other night, in ‘ Mrs. Oakley,’ was quite first rate. In sensibility, she is indeed ‘ for tenderness formed.’ In the affair of the heart, she touches nearer than Mrs. Siddons ; we may, with great truth, apply to her the language of the poet—

‘ poor Monimia mourns,
And Belvidera pours her soul in love.’

I now believe in Thespis and his adventures, for this lady first acted in a stable. Tell it not to the Covent Garden people, or they will plead it for their horses."

Notwithstanding the inhibition of Phipps, Elliston yet entered into a long correspondence with Jones on this subject, which, after a few weeks, was brought to a termination by Elliston abandoning the scheme altogether.

In the same month Elliston commenced a similar correspondence with Harry Siddons respecting the Edinburgh theatre. Managers and proprietors appeared unanimous on the extraordinary qualifications of Elliston for conducting theatrical affairs, all assuring him he was the only fit person to be placed at the helm of their adventurous barks. Mr. Siddons says—

" You and you only could render the Edinburgh property the most lucrative in the island. It has the materials of permanent prosperity, which but require an energy in directing. A heart-weariness of management could alone induce me to part with a property so really valuable, but myself and wife are of one mind, that a private station, with less means, would better suit our dispositions—a feeling with which your active temper may have but little sympathy."

Here was another match broken off; not that the great dramatic polygamist had any hesitation of

throwing himself into the arms of a new mistress, as will presently be seen, but the *divorcée* of Sidons appeared not so attractive in his eyes, to risk any of that "heart-weariness" which had occasioned the repudiation of her "lord Harry."

Within three weeks of the termination of the above suit, Elliston entered into a new courtship. The Birmingham theatre was announced to be let, and he became lessee for a term of five years, with covenants to keep open doors during twenty weeks in each year, and to act himself at least on twelve nights in each season,* &c.

The two great London patentees now took alarm. Elliston had opened his "Little Drury" on Easter last, with burlettas and musical pieces, &c., under

* Theatrical exhibitions in Birmingham are rather of a modern date. As far as we can learn, the stroller occupied occasionally a shed of boards in the fields, now called Temple Street. In 1730, the stage was advanced to a stable in Castle Street, and the audience admitted at threepence a-head. In 1740, a theatre was erected in Moor Street. During the day, the comedian beat up his volunteers for the night, scattering his bills, and proclaiming the merits of his company. In 1751, a party arrived in Birmingham, calling themselves—"His Majesty's Servants from the Theatres Royal," and expressed a hope the public would excuse the ceremony of a drum about the streets, as being beneath the dignity of a London Company. In 1752, a larger theatre, in King Street, was erected, and two companies were now playing in Birmingham. This was fatal to the Moor Street establishment, that house being soon converted into a Methodist meeting. In 1774, the theatre in New Street was built on an extensive plan, with very superior accommodation.

a licence for the whole year, which he had safe enough in his pocket, and the proprietors of Covent-garden and Drury-lane theatres now memorialized the Chamberlain to the effect that, when the licence had been originally granted to Philip Astley, they had been assured by his Lordship that it should be only for the period during which the Amphitheatre at Westminster-bridge was closed, and then only for equestrian exhibitions. Here certainly had been a great oversight in the Chamberlain's office ; this promise had doubtless been made, and the patentees had a right to complain ; but it is no less true that Elliston was officially armed by the power with which he had commenced operations, and could not fairly be disseised. He, however, received notice that, notwithstanding the statement he had made, the performances must be discontinued.

By this arbitrary decision, Elliston suffered considerable loss ; but his letters to the Chamberlain, Whitbread, and the Covent-Garden proprietors were manly, spirited, and gentlemanly. Elliston was, nevertheless, constrained to submit ; had he further resisted, it is clear no renewal of his licence would have taken place. His benefit, however, at the close of this season, at Drury-lane theatre, amounted to 702*l*.

In the meantime, operations at the Surrey went on prosperously. A melo-dramatic piece, under the title, "Lewellyn," was produced, in which the chief

performers were two extraordinary dogs. Like the old Lady's pet, they “ could do everything but speak,” and sure such a pair was never seen, as *Gelert* and *Victor*, in Blackfriars-road. The poet has said—

“ Brutes are my present theme, what then?—
I never said they equal'd men ;”

but in this instance they far surpassed the combined human force at the Surrey Theatre. *Gelert* and *Victor* were in larger letters in the daily bills than Giroux and Taylor of the previous season, and certainly behaved far better.

The following public announcement was truly *Ellistonian*—

“ A CARD.—In consequence of the extraordinary excitement into which the public mind has been thrown in respect of the two dogs, *Gelert* and *Victor*, now under engagement at the Surrey Theatre, and exhibiting nightly instances of sagacity—it might almost be said, reasoning powers—Mr. Elliston offers no objection to respectable parties visiting the animals between the hours of one and three of the afternoon. But to guard himself against the sinister views of malignant jealousy, Mr. Elliston requests that parties who may thus honour his establishment at the time above stated, will insert their names in a book left for that purpose, at the stage entrance.”

Elliston was acquainted with (and amongst public

men, at this period, who was not?) the eccentric John Taylor, or *Jack Taylor*, or *Sun Taylor*, or *Oculist Taylor*, or *Taylor the Punster*, with sundry other *cognomina*, all of which he had well earned by his versatility of fancy and employment. Of the "Sun" newspaper, Taylor was proprietor and editor, and had consequently ample opportunity for the indulgence of his wit in stanzas "pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical or tragical-comical."*

* Taylor was a punster—an inveterate punster—and extremely fond of the theatre—a play, either on the stage or on words. He had a peculiar expression which he applied to most persons, at random—namely, "He's an odd man." For example, he would say, "I called yesterday on So-and-so—he's an odd man. Saw his wife—she's an odd woman; the young curate was at dinner—clever—but he's an odd man; saw the new *Juliet* last night, nothing remarkable about her—but she's an odd girl."

Going into the Green-room of the Haymarket theatre on one occasion, he was requested to subscribe a small sum to a distressed chemist, who had lived in Panton Street, and had been well-known to Colman. "A broken chemist, is he?" said Taylor. "Well, there's half-a-crown for the exhausted receiver."

"On another night," says Colman, "Taylor being behind the scenes when a part, at a short notice, had been put into the hands of a certain lady, who was no great favourite with either actors or visitors, she said, 'Well, if I must go through it, I'll put a good face on it;' to which Taylor replied, 'If your acting the part has anything to do with the good face you can put upon it, you'd better give up the trial altogether.'"

On a subsequent occasion, Taylor dining with Colman, the latter holding up the decanter, which had just been replenished, observed, "Gad! small bottles these, I fancy;" to

Taylor thus writes to our friend :—

“ I thank you much for the entertainment you afforded me on Tuesday last—the first time I had been abroad since my illness. I fancy I am all the better for your fire and smoke ; it got into my lungs, set me coughing, and gave me exercise. Your dogs are marvels. Roberts, my apothecary, gives me bark by day, and you afford the same by night.

“ But, my good friend, why do you scatter yourself in this manner ? We hear of you in twenty theatres in half the number of nights. And why do you give the meridian of your powers to nocturnal revels ? You are ever dreaming, yet never asleep ; in fact, you are an odd man.

“ I have read your pamphlet in answer to the memorialists of Covent Garden and Drury Lane, and am bound to say, you're a clever creature—a polemic of the first order.

“ I perceive a notice of ‘ Pizarro ’ in your bills. Is this for your benefit, and will the Drury Lane people allow it ? Our concern shall give you a friendly report ; but we can do nothing more for you. Our ‘ Virgins of the Sun,’ have followed Lord Yarmouth to Drury Lane, which no one knows better than yourself.

which Taylor answered, “ Ay, ay, as a poet, Colman, you ought to know better than to give us a false quantity.”

Colman having accused him of uttering an old joke, “ Well, well,” replied Taylor, “ there's nothing new under the ‘ Sun.’ ”

“ I thank you for your civilities ; but till the weather improves, I shall not stir out again—like the poor gentleman, I may say, ‘ I have seen better days.’

“ I wish you would send copies of your catalogues to Francis Freeling, of the General Post-office—he is a great purchaser of curious books. Should you not be acquainted with him, you may say that it was by my desire you sent them. He is one of the most liberal beings I ever knew ; but he is an odd man. Yours ever,

“ JOHN TAYLOR.”

At the usual period for commencing operations at Drury Lane Theatre, Elliston returned from Birmingham to London, but did not open his Wych-street establishment until December, and was then compelled to designate it “ The Olympic ;” the title “ *Little Drury*” being offensive to the great patentees.

Miss Tidswell, for many years an actress at Drury Lane Theatre, having about this time made application to Elliston for an engagement in favour of her nephew, Edmund Kean, the following correspondence took place :—

“ Barnstaple, Oct. 2, 1813.

“ SIR,—I have this moment received your proposals for the Wych-street Theatre—*id est*—Little Drury, and much deplore your letter not finding

me. Neglect does not rank in the catalogue of my follies.

“ The terms Miss Tidswell, by your authority, mentioned to me, is the superintending the stage, the whole of the principal line of business under all denomination of acting, and an equal division of the house, on the night of my benefit, with three guineas a-week for salary.

“ The pecuniary terms, I own, do not justify the renown of your establishment ; but I place so firm a reliance on your reputed liberality, that on the proof of my humble abilities and assiduity towards the promotion of your interests, you will not be unmindful of mine, I accept, sir, your present proposal, simply requesting you will name what time you expect me in London. I shall be found here for three weeks, and shall be glad to hear from you forthwith.

“ Your obedient servant,

J. Kean.

It appears, however, that on the 29th of the same month, Kean addressed a letter to Dr. Drury, requesting a reply to an application which he had already made to that gentleman, for a situation at Drury Lane Theatre, saying at the same time, that he had received offers from Mr. Elliston for the

Wych Street Theatre ; that he feared the entertainments there produced, would be detrimental to a regular tragedian, but that he held the matter in reserve, in case of failure in his more desirable point.

On the 13th of November, Mr. Whitbread wrote to Dr. Drury, stating that the representations made by Mr. Pascoe Grenfell, respecting Kean's talent, were such as to make it desirous Mr. Arnold should see him on the stage, and suggested the actor's coming to London for a trial, the committee paying all his expenses, &c.

In the meantime, on the 11th of November, Kean had again addressed Elliston, saying, that in the event of his services being required before the time stipulated, he should be ready to make his appearance in Wych-street in ten days.

To this proposal, it does not appear Elliston assented. He awaited only the time first appointed for the arrival of the country actor. But on the 19th, he received the following, dated Dorchester:—

“SIR,—Since I last wrote to you, I have received a very liberal offer, from the proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre. It gives me unspeakable regret, that the proposals did not reach me before I had commenced negotiating with you ; but I hope, sir, you will take a high and liberal view of the question, when I beg to decline the engagement for

Little Drury. Another time I shall be happy to treat with you.

“ I am, sir, with unfeigned respect,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ E. KEAN.”

This was verily taking the bull by the horns. Kean attempted neither to quibble nor fence with the fact, but confessing his engagement with Elliston, trampled all obligations at once beneath his feet, pronouncing only, “ My reason’s in my will.” Such was a line of proceeding Elliston was but little inclined to take gently, and immediately addressed Kean to that very positive effect ; the consequence of which was another communication from his country friend, but couched in a far different style and character. Kean was now in London in Cecil-street.

“ SIR—The fate of my family is in your hands. Are you determined to crush the object that never injured you ? In one word—are you to receive our curses or our blessings ?

“ Through your means I am deprived of my situation in Drury Lane Theatre, unless I produce a document from you that I am not a member of the New Olympic. How can you reconcile this more than Turkish barbarity ? If you must display your power, direct it against one more fortunate than

myself. Were it not presumption, I should say with Virgil—

“Vixque tenet lacrymas, quia nil lacrymabile cernit.”*

You have become a thorn in the side of my young fortune. The man, who by his aid I was inclined to suppose, would bestow on a friendless candidate some advantage, has suddenly changed his features, and looks hideously upon him. I shall conclude, by simply requesting you to inform me whether I am to become a member of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, or again, penniless, hopeless, and despised, am I to be cast again on the provinces, the rejected of this great city, which should afford a home to industry of every kind? *With my family at my back will I return, for the walls of Wych Street I will never enter.* In this strong determination, but with weakened respect for you, sir, I am,

E. KEAN.”

Elliston rejoins—

“To any man with the smallest gift of intellect and the dimmest sense of honour, it must appear that on the 11th of November, and previous to that time, you deemed yourself engaged to me, and that subsequently, a more attractive offer having been made, you held it convenient to consider a pledge as idle as words muttered in a dream.

* The line is to be found in Ovid. Met., which is here of little consequence.

"To your rodomontade I send nothing in reply, and your Latin hexameter I beg to present you with again, as it may be useful on some future occasion. Your letter I shall lay before Mr. Arnold, who, perhaps, will advise with me. All my engagements are made and fulfilled with honour on my part, and I expect an equal punctuality from others.

"I am yours obediently,

"R. W. ELLISTON."

While this difference was pending, Kean thus addresses his friend, Manager Lee, of Taunton :—

"My dear Lee,—I am in a damned situation, or, rather, in no situation at all. Elliston has claimed my services, but I will never join the toss-pot. The Drury Lane Committee have decided against me, and have actually withdrawn my salary. Not all the world, or the world's ills shall force me into that feculent hole in Wych Street. So here am I in London, without friends, without money, and a brand upon me by which I can acquire neither.

" ' Prosperity's a cheat—despair is honest.' "

But the Kean and Elliston case, with all its acrimony, was soon after brought to a settlement. The Wych Street manager consented to cancel the engagement, on the condition that Kean should compensate H. Wallack with three pounds per week, to take his duties at the Olympic; and the new hero

of Drury entered on his memorable career at a salary of eight pounds per week.

Elliston possessed, in an eminent degree, the art of rendering himself mysterious ; but on one occasion the mystification extended to the whole Olympic company.

Advancing from his room in the Theatre, on a certain evening, where he had been honouring, peradventure, his own *symposium*, and walking mysteriously on the stage, he inquired for his manager, Mr. S. Russell. Russell promptly appeared, and Elliston, holding him by a button, confidentially whispered to him some words which Russell could not at the moment distinguish.

“ What did you say ? ” inquired Russell.

Elliston merely winked at his stage-manager, and uttered with earnestness, “ *Violino obligato.* ”

Russell, who was perfectly aware of the eccentricities of Elliston, merely waited for a solution ; but Elliston fixed his eyes on him, and said with gravity, “ Do you understand me ? *Violino obligato.* ”

Russell then affected to comprehend, and sent the call-boy down to the orchestra to say that when the overture was over, Mr. Elliston wished to speak to Mr. Mountain, the leader.

Edmund Elliston, born September 17, 1813 ; godfather, S. Rundall,

In the meantime, Elliston caught sight of the master carpenter, and beckoning him to his presence said, with an air of profundity, "*Violino obbligato.*"

"What is it, sir?" asked the carpenter, touching his hat. Elliston put his mouth close to the carpenter's ear, and muttered, "*Violino obbligato.*"

The carpenter was puzzled, and begged Mr. Elliston's pardon, but he really did not know what he meant.

The overture being over, and the curtain about to rise, the prompter gave the usual word to clear the stage, when Elliston turned to him with an indescribable look, and said, "*Violino obbligato.*" He then went off at the side, where Mrs. Edwin was waiting to begin the piece, and, shaking her warmly by the hand, he gazed in her face, repeating "*Violino obbligato.*"

Presently, Mr. Mountain came up, as he had been requested, and asked what Mr. Elliston had to say to him.

"*Violino obbligato*" was the only reply.

Mountain put several questions in the hope of obtaining a direct answer, but he could not elicit anything else but "*Violino obbligato.*"

Mountain, who was a good solo-player on the violin, now concluded that Mr. Elliston wished him to perform something of the sort, but he thought he would wait until the manager should be more explicit on the subject.

A new melo-drama was to be produced on the following Monday, but there had been some difference of opinion as to its title. Fairbrother, the printer, was in attendance with the proof of the play-bill, and he was waiting the decision of Mr. Elliston to insert the name of the melo-drama.

"What is to be the title of the new piece, sir?" asked the printer.

"*Violino obbligato*," replied Elliston.

"Sir?" answered the printer.

"*Violino Obbligato*, sir," said Elliston, in his most imperturbable manner.

The people who were about our hero were well accustomed to his oddities, and knew that when the fit was over, all would go right again.

At the end of the middle piece Elliston brushed up his hair with his hand, and buttoning his coat, passed the prompter without saying a word, and walked on the stage before the curtain with his hat in his hand, and bowed stiffly to the audience, putting up his under lip, he thus addressed them:—

"Ladies and Gentlemen, — I should consider myself an ineffective caterer, for the public, and quite unworthy your patronage, if I omitted any opportunity in my endeavours to amuse you. I therefore, most respectfully inform you that, notwithstanding the extraordinary attraction of the present novelties, (and I beg to assure you that our success has been marvellous,)—notwithstanding, I say, the great popularity of the entertainments you

are this evening (I trust) enjoying, I deem it imperative to produce on Monday next, an entirely new melo-drama of powerful incident, the title of which, for cogent reasons connected with the immediate interests of *my* property (this theatre), I must for the present withhold.

“ All that I can, at this moment, venture to divulge, Ladies and Gentlemen, is

“ *Violino Obligato.*”

Elliston then made his bow and quitted the stage, leaving the audience in a state of mystification ; he then determined to go home, and ordered Evans, his messenger, to get him a coach ; while the man had gone out for it, Elliston wrote a note to his stage manager, in rather unsteady penmanship :

“ MY DEAR RUSSELL,—Do not omit in the morning to remind me of “ *Violino Obligato.*”

“ Yours, R. W. E.”

Evans returned with the Hackney-coach, and Elliston was assisted into it.

“ Where shall I tell the coachman to drive, sir ?” said Evans.

Elliston looked out at the window, and replied “ *Violino Obligato.*”

“ Where, sir ?” inquired Evans.

“ To Stratford-place, sir,—*Violino Obligato !*”

It is almost needless to say that, on the following morning, when questioned by Russell, Elliston had not the slightest recollection of the events of the preceding evening, so no further allusion was made in his hearing, to the words "*Violino Obligato*."

Under the various phases of Elliston's character, we must here exhibit a likeness of extreme forbearance and good nature. Amongst the persons employed at the Olympic was a scene-painter, who had the misfortune of not being highly popular with his fellow-labourers in the establishment—in fact, a most disagreeable fellow. One of the carpenters projected a trick to mortify him, and this was placing a vessel nearly full of red paint on the upper edge of his working-room door, as it stood ajar, which, on any one entering, would consequently be capsized, like "Prone descending rain," right over his person. The vessel being all ready, the next purpose was to induce the said artist to make his way to the room in question, and receive his "*quantum meruit*."

But by some mismanagement, at the moment, Elliston himself came by, and having business to transact in the scenic department, with his usual dignity of action, threw open the charged door, when the vermillion shower fell with a precision over his head and shoulders, which almost threatened suffocation. Consternation filled the

minds of the skulking conspirators—and well it might. As soon as Elliston could recover his breath, in terrific accents he commanded that the whole establishment should be summoned before him ; this was instantly obeyed. Red and fiery, like *Zamiel* himself, he yet sat down with imperturbed dignity, when, shaking his gory locks, or rather the cardinal's hat, with which he had just been invested, he demanded instant explanation of the event, and the surrender of the offender.

The real culprit now stood forward, and at once confessed himself both the adviser and executor of the plot, but thoroughly explaining for whom the revenge was intended.

“ Ay ! ” said Elliston — “ for Mr. —, say you ? ”

“ Upon my honour ! ” was the reply.

“ Then I forgive you ! ” rejoined Elliston, and marched off to his room to incarnadine the Olympic pump with the whole evidence of his dishonour.

CHAPTER V.

Kean's parentage—His infancy—Early anecdotes—Tippoo Saib—Young actors—A consternation—Richardson's booth—Kean at "Offley's"—A scene—A room in an uproar—Fresh undertakings—Ill-starred actors—To and fro—Bartley in dilemma—An extraordinary double—How accomplished—Half witch, half baronet—Dissensions—Whitbread's letter—A Brummagem emeute—Charles Dignum—His history—The Duke of Sussex—Dignum's death—"Anthony Pasquin."

THE publication of the "Memoirs of Edmund Kean," and sundry Miscellaneous Recollections connected with that remarkable actor, having been for years before the public, render it unnecessary to say much on the subject in this place, which otherwise would have been an indispensable part of our history. Some few statements, however, having been hazarded, fairly enough, respecting Kean's infancy, of which nothing really authentic has ever transpired, we will venture to offer, amongst other probabilities, the belief of one who took considerable pains to arrive at the truth, and had so much opportunity of satisfying himself.

The stripling, known in a certain wayfaring troop of *Atellanæ* by the name Carey, and afterwards, in

Fame's mighty orbit, as Edmund Kean, was born, in all probability, in the year 1788. As to his parentage, this is altogether "buried in surmise," arising rather from contradictory statements than the absence of information, so that we must be content to place it amongst those "Mysteries" which were the parent of his own peculiar art, and as a descendant of *Cælus* and *Terra*, receive him at once as a divinity.

Kean himself, at times, (for he was never twice together in the same story,) would claim the parentage of the Duke of Norfolk—a West India merchant, by the name of Duncan—and one Edward Kean, in the employ of a Mr. Wilmot, a builder. Thus, under the names *Howard*, *Duncan*, *Kean*, and sometimes *Clarke* (which latter he assumed from one of his early patronesses), he variously amused his own imagination, and completely mystified the fact to others.* But Kean, without doubt, knew as little about the matter as any unwise child could be supposed—one person, Miss Tidswell, for many years an actress at Drury Lane Theatre, was supposed to be in the secret, but as her accounts, like those of Kean, were not always homologous, she has still bequeathed to us as much doubt on the subject. Miss Tidswell sometimes called herself his aunt,

* Joseph Trefusis, an actor who appeared soon after the Restoration, acquired the greater part of his fame by declaring himself a natural son of Oliver Cromwell.

and Kean sometimes saluted her as mother ; these, however, might have been mere playful terms, “signifying nothing.”

According to Miss Tidswell’s *general* story, Kean was the child of Edward Kean, by Nancy Carey, an actress ; and born in Gray’s Inn, 1789. Scarcely was he two years of age, when his mother abandoned him ; Miss Tidswell then generously took him under her protection, and brought him up in London.

This account, the author of “*Memoirs*,” &c., has selected as the most probable, because, it was the more frequently repeated, but which Messrs. Hughes and Winston (the former, who knew more about him than any one perhaps, except Miss Tidswell, and the latter, a kind of dramatic *Rushworth*, always collecting) were much inclined to doubt. Their persuasion was, that our subject was born at Arundel ; of what parentage they wot not ; but confidently assert he was not removed from that town until he was six years old, and knew nothing of the Careys until after that time.

“The child whom many fathers share,
Hath seldom known a father’s care.”

Then it was that he passed under the protection of Miss Tidswell, who was sojourning with Moses Kean, a one-legged tailor, who had acquired some notoriety by giving imitations of the popular actors.

Moses was the brother of young Kean's reputed father, Edward.

Miss Tidswell, who in 1788 had some *weighty* reasons for a short absence from Drury Lane, certainly took a maternal interest in the child, and, in 1794, obtained a place for him in the theatre, where he actually made his *debut* at the opening of the new building, as one of the red spirits in Macbeth.

But young Carey was a wild, ungovernable boy—"tetchy and wayward was his infancy"—frequently would he "take to his heels and run" from "aunt Tid," and was sometimes absent for a whole fortnight, together. On one occasion, after an anxious search he was found actually tarred and feathered at a public house in St. George's Fields, collecting a few pence, as largess for the amusement he had afforded the company in the "tap," by reciting, tumbling, and singing. His protectress, at length, procured a brass collar to be placed about his neck, on which was engraved—"This boy belongs to No. 9, Lisle-street, Leicester-square—please bring him home;"—So incorrigible was the lad, that "poor Tid" was frequently compelled to chain him up during her absence.

Liston—the incomparable John Liston—in 1800 held the situation of usher at Archbishop Tenison's School, St. Martin's.* During a temporary ab-

* We offer, in proof, the copy of an original document:—
"Received of the Rev. Dr. Hamilton, this 2nd day of October,

sence of the master, (commonly called "Pownall the Pompous,") the lads petitioned their viceroy for permission to act a play, on a certain night in Whitsun week. The drama was quite original, entitled, "Tippoo Saib," and written by one of the leading boys, who has long since been known to the world as a dramatic composer. This lad could write, but, like the great Dryden, could not personate his own conceptions. Something was to be done in respect of their chief actor, for the part *Tippoo* was first-rate in its kind, and required an equal genius for its impersonation.

"I know a chap, young Carey," said one of the boys, "who does Cupids and devils at Drury Lane—a regular *Tippoo*, all over—he'll come, I warrant you."

On one of his "collar days," therefore, application was made to young Kean, or Carey, for his valuable assistance. The youth jumped at the proposal; "but I must give Aunt Tid the slip," said he, "in good time—must run away—'tis fineish weather—I'll be off to my old lodgings, the trees in St. James's Park;" and the future *Richard* was as good as his word.

Descending from his rookery at stated times, young Kean attended the furtive rehearsals—

1798, the sum of Three Pounds Fifteen Shillings, for half a quarter's salary, due to me on Michaelmas last, for attendance at the Free Grammar School, in Castle Street, Leicester Square. 3*l.* 15*s.*—JOHN LISTON."

painted a famous Seringapatam,—worked away at the dresses—in fact, was both the van and flank of the mighty armament. The night arrived. Liston, the equally truant usher, occupied his own chair, as a kind of stage-box; the beadle of the parish was present; and sundry still minor functionaries of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. The business commenced most prosperously—all were delighted; but the ecstasy participated by the chief actor and the virgin bard, was a sum of bliss which rarely falls to the children of this world.

Scarcely had a round of applause subsided into mute attention, when a growl, more startling and terrific than had ever awakened the echoes of Mysore, occasioned the affrighted party to turn their eyes in one common direction. *Pownall the Pompous*, the very aspect of Titus Oates, had returned unexpectedly to St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, and was at this moment grinning a ghastly smile through an iron-grating from the staircase, which commanded an entire view of the whole scenic effects. All was immediate consternation—a bull in a crockery booth, or a tiger's spring on travellers in repose, could scarcely have surpassed this moment of dismay. Down rushed the infuriate pedagogue, and armed with his well-known ferule, commenced laying about him with all the vigour which an extra glass had inspired, and all the malice which was so peculiarly his own. Sprawl-

ing fell the beadle over the already prostrate *David Baird*, while the *Marshal Harris* crept like a rabbit into the burrow of Liston's capacious pocket. Liston, a tithe of whose comic cast has since won him immortal honours, would have moved the gravity of a very wretch under the gibbet. *Tippoo*, so prematurely routed, had vaulted on a fragile book-case, from which citadel he was to have fallen in the coming scene, whilst the poet himself bobbed with agile evitation under the reiterating bamboo, like a *Scaramouch* at Sadler's Wells.

Some very few years from the above event, our identical poet, who in the meantime had been converting old novels into new plays (as an huckster will turn you a worn-out surtout into a pair of small clothes), linked with his new-made bride, was threading his way through the *Paphian* bowers of Bartholomew Fair; quitting awhile the austerity of letters to mingle the vacant laugh of the common herd.

In the act of gazing on the muscular contortions of two clowns, the visitors were standing in front of Richardson's well-known booth, persuaded that in the dignity of their caste they were secure from vulgar recognition, and might snatch a peep through the blanket of this "Mad world, my Masters." The manager of the company, a brawny north-countryman in a large green coat, plated buttons, and light

leathern netherlings, had thrice announced, by the thunder of his speaking-trumpet, " Just going to begin—now's your only time ! " when one of the duplicate clowns, crouching low and grotesquely, placing a hand on each knee, fixed his black piercing eyes on the poet and his fair *Saccharissa*.

Somewhat disconcerted by so special an evidence of distinction, our visitors were about masking themselves under cover of the crowd, when little merryman, with the agility of Jacco himself, slipped down from one of the blue posts, which supported the gigantic Roman capitals, RICHARDSON'S, and rushing through the open-mouthed auditory, pursued the fugitive bard, and seizing him round the neck, in nature's own ecstasy, smothered him with a thousand tokens of affection. As marble, pale was the poet, and almost as cold ; affected, indeed, he seemed, with all the properties of stone, save that of firmness, for he was near sinking on the earth. As to the lady, a faintness came over her, more deathlike than she had even exhibited ten days before at the Hymeneal altar ; and in a twinkling, a thousand pair of eyes, which but now had been directed to the elevated dais of Richardson, were fixed on the unaccountable scene beneath it.

" What ! not recollect me ?—*me !* " exclaimed the tufted tumbler, " Carey,* your little manager Carey,

* Woodward and Lee Lewis made their first essay on the stage as harlequins ; and Baddely was brought up in Foote's kitchen.

and your own *Tippoo*?—the thrashing we both got, too? 'ods whacks!" continued he, humorously rubbing his shoulders, at which the mob roared again, "I feel it now."

This was too much. Tippoo, even Hyder himself, would have cowered under so fierce an attack; and the poet, covered with shame and confusion, in which his partner participated without at all diminishing, slunk away from these sudden effects, literally like a dog in a fair.

Carey of Richardson's Booth, became, in due season, the Kean of Drury Lane. The dynasty of *Tippoo* was not forgotten; but still more indelibly fixed on the memory of Kean was this last drama on the soil of Smithfield. In 1814, the poet and the player again met. Half fearful of the result, the former made his approaches to the tragedian; too soon did he discover his fears were not without foundation. Kean had, in fact, hugged the opportunity for his revenge, and in the full satisfaction of his indignant spirit, trampled on the advances of the playwright with the ferocity of a *Timon*.

On a certain evening, shortly after his memorable *debut* at Drury Lane, Kean, accompanied by his old and faithful ally, Jack Hughes, dropped in, or rather *dropped up* (by way of catachresis) at Offley's *premier étage*, the cider-room, in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden. Ensconced in a snug corner of

the apartment, the two friends were enjoying their "nip," and as the conversation of the room was a right of common, they felt themselves no trespassers in nipping that pasturage also.

As it generally happens, in places of this kind, there is one certain personage who usurps the lead on all topics—one, who would teach Hannibal the art of war; so was the case at this period, at Offley's. This individual was a Mr. Watson, or Wason, a red-headed wholesale tobacconist, and a charlatan "warranted town made." But Watson was a man who might have called Junius Brutus himself a pretender, for Watson was *really* a fool. At the court of Offley, however, he had obtained the *Cordon bleu*, and had a considerable tail, though there was not a "wag" in it.

Watson, who knew the movements of the town far better than the *Morning Post*, had already enlightened his auditory on the intrigues of Lady Douglas, in the case of the Princess, when he led the conversation, not unnaturally, to the subject of the new actor at Drury Lane.

"It is true enough," said he, stirring up the flaming forest which grew upon his pole, "Dr. Drury brought him to town. He talked with me on the subject—in fact, we went together into Dorsetshire to see him act. I shall never forget Kean's gratitude when we proposed his appearance at Drury Lane."

Here Kean thrust himself forward like a ferret, gazing at the head of the speaker in perfect wonderment ; and the “ blood-red knight ” proceeded—

“ I saw him to-day in Cecil Street—he is in the very ecstasy of triumph—and well he may. A nice child, his son ; but I am afraid my friend has something yet to learn.”

“ How ?—what is that ? ” demanded the whole tail at once.

“ Why, he thrashes his wife,” replied the oracle, with the aspect of a Red Indian ; “ ‘ and he who raises his hand on a woman, except in an act of kindness, it were base flattery to call a coward.’ ”

A murmur of applause followed this dramatic scrap, when Kean having quickly passed from a ferret into a tiger, was only withheld by the gripe of Hughes from springing on the carrotty tobacconist. The dealer in Virginia still went on :—
“ This was his,” said he, carelessly, as he pulled from his pocket a little chased snuff-box,—“ this was Kean’s—a slight token of his obligation to me, as he was pleased to say. I carry it for his sake.”

“ Do you, by the gods ! ” exclaimed Kean, and darting from his corner, he grasped the slight token from the table, and hurled it through the window glass into the street.

Consternation seized the tobacconist, as though Cuba itself had been suddenly swallowed by the sea ; but up rose his tail, like a water-spout, threat-

ening annihilation to the undaunted little actor, who stood with his arms folded, like a stone terminus on a parapet.

“I am Edmund Kean!” exclaimed he, grinding his teeth. “Slanderer! for the first time behold him! I am the Kean!”

The whole West Indies seemed now in a state of insurrection. The company rushed in a body towards the sturdy tragedian, and verily believing him to be an impostor, notwithstanding the humiliation of the wholesale dealer, assailed him with violence, and finally expelled him the house. Little Hughes came in for his share of the buffeting; and with a shoe less than he entered the apartment, accompanied his friend, to finish the evening, and consult future proceedings, at No. 21, Cecil Street.

To Elliston's personal services at Drury Lane, the trifling responsibility of two theatrical managements were now added—the Surrey and the Olympic.* During the short term these two were simultaneously open, the actors, who were common to both, played, as the occasion might demand,

* Ryder, the Irish manager, possessed the Crow Street, Smock Alley, and Capel Street Theatres. He was costly and extravagant in his house and equipage, and his end was like that of the tavern-keepers, who spend within the bar what is made in the coffee-room.—On Ryder's quitting his wife for a single day, she always made him take a vow of fidelity, and on his return called on him to swear to the truth of his obedience.

either at one, the other, or both, on the same evening. This acting positively in two counties on the same night, gave rise, as may be well supposed, to repeated and distressing dilemmas.

Frequently the poor player, after exciting a roar of merriment in St. George's Fields, his own eyes moist with far different sensations, had to traverse the bleak granite of Blackfriar's Bridge, to raise another burst of delight in the unconscious auditory of Wych Street. Stealthily behind some coach, and wofully behind their time, a pair of half-clad players would make this middle passage in "thunder, lightning, or in rain." Often and often, the exhausting pores which had been streaming in a Surrey atmosphere, encountered the treacherous bracing from the East, or chilled again on the centre arch, to take the febrifuge prescribed in fresh exertions at St. Clement Danes. Thus, at the hard brokerage of fifteen shillings a week, were health, labour, and ceaseless anxiety estimated; acquirements, also, not unfrequently, which might shame the wealthy, while sickness, having nothing to pledge, save only a breaking heart, had not the bidding of a doit; for in theatrical life, sickness and disease pay the penalty of dereliction of duty.

We mean not to shoot our arrow at the humanity of Elliston. On the contrary, he was generally kind, considerate, and just; but such is the fate—the hard, humiliating lot of the poor players; that far more numerous portion, whose humbler talents

bring them not within the world's acquaintance, and whose misery keeps them still more obscure.

In 1834, (if for a general example we may be pardoned such anticipation of facts,) when Covent Garden and Drury Lane Theatres were rented by the same lessee, occurrences yet more remarkable in their way, nightly took place. The managerial scheme was to work the two theatres with a company and a half. The actors who had performed in the play at one house, were usually required to bear a part in the farce at the other. Broad Court and Martlett Buildings, from about half-past nine at night, to a quarter from ten, exhibited a most extraordinary scene.

Actors half attired, with enamelled faces, and loaded with the paraphernalia of their art, were passing and repassing, as busy as pismires, whilst the hurried interchange of quaint words—"stage waits"—"music on"—"rung up," &c., would have perplexed the stranger with a thousand surmises. Double-basses, trombones, long drums, books, and wearing apparel carried on the heads of figure dancers, apparently just started from their beds, might have suggested an event—

"As when, by night and negligence, a fire
Is spied in populous cities—

while, on the other hand, the variety of costume, peeping from numberless cloaks and provisional

wrappers, would carry the traveller back to the convention of all nations, the grand Cairo itself.

On one occasion, Bartley, whose business it was to play in the tragedy at Drury Lane, had to begin also the farce at Covent Garden. The first piece, on this evening, at the latter house, had been short, and was brought even earlier than usual to a conclusion, by no *encore* of the songs having taken place. After a lapse of some ten minutes, the audience became impatient ("unruly," as Elliston would have said,) and messengers were accordingly despatched, demanding Bartley's instant attendance.

Bartley, considering that a per centage on his tragedy might easily be spared, or more readily be supplied by another, than the absence of his merry face in the farce of "My Neighbour's Wife," kicked off his buskins at Drury, and running to Covent Garden, was speedily in his dressing-room, where he instantly began pulling on his well-remembered lilac pantaloons. But being somewhat agitated by the importunity of the prompter's boy, and in a considerable state of perspiration, he had more than usual difficulty, so that the pantaloons gave way in the struggle, presenting the most graceless rent in arrear that ever freeholder experienced. This, of course, augmented the delay, and the delay had the same effect on the patience of the auditory; they were, however, pacified by some timely explanation, and within another quar-

ter of an hour, Bartley appeared in his own respectable grey trousers, and went comfortably through his part.

At the season of Christmas, when the state of alternation was at its height, the female figure dancers pattered from one house to another, six times during the evening, and underwent the operation of dressing and undressing no less than eight !

In the old times, (which have set up a prescriptive title to the term "good" in all matters incidental to them,) the Haymarket Theatre was opened some ten days before the close of the winter houses. During these ten days, there was but a skeleton company at the former, until the great patentees gave up their own flesh and blood, by which it was clothed. Many, and frequently ridiculous, were the shifts to which this anatomized body was subject, in the short interval. One circumstance occurred, which, at the first blush (and verily it was of a character to raise one), would appear positively impracticable ; but the prime agent in the affair being still living, (with our best wishes to him,) can testify the truth. It was that of Farley acting an important part in the *play* of Covent Garden, and also at the Haymarket, on the same night ; the two *plays*, be it remembered, being the first pieces of the entertainments at both establishments.

At Covent Garden, the curtain rose at half past

six o'clock, and in the Haymarket at seven ; at the former, Farley was cast into one of Macbeth's witches, and at the latter, in the part of *Sir Philip Modelove*, in the comedy of " A Bold Stroke for a Wife."

Having, most emphatically, " with toil and trouble," gone through the mystery of the first scene at Covent Garden, Farley now " hovered through the foul and murky air," in the direction of the Haymarket, which he reached in ample time to equip himself for the baronet, who does not make his scenic appearance until the second act of the play. The act being concluded, Farley, with due alacrity, returned to his witchery at Covent Garden, which being perpetrated, he again mounted his broom, and scud through the air a second time to the Haymarket, where he reappeared, in full Protean mastery, *Sir Philip Modelove* ; for *Sir Philip* does not make his second *entré* until the fifth act of the drama.

The dove-tailing of this remarkable night's performance was, in fact, thus accomplished :—A hackney-coach, during the evening, was in readiness ; this was furnished with a dresser, necessary habiliments, and a pair of candles. From the stage-door of Covent Garden the " weird sister " sprang into the jarvey, when the dresser, pulling up the mahogany blinds, commenced attiring the patient comedian for the part of the old beau ; this was

nearly accomplished by the time they reached the stage-door in Suffolk-street, and what little remained afterwards to be done, was easily effected.

The first act of the comedy being over, in jumped Farley again with his man "Friday," and commenced the task of the double transformation. On returning, however, for his last scene at Covent Garden, the coach, in making the corner of Hedge-row, (now called Whitcomb-street,) came in contact with a post, and, immediately upsetting, poured its full contents, actor, dresser, candles, and all the heterogeneous matter into the highway. The upsetting of a coach in London, is of itself an occurrence not unlikely to bring about it a few of the curious ; but the capsizing of this identical vehicle, thus freighted, was an event which perhaps the most travelled of our citizens never before witnessed.

Half witch and half baronet, poor Farley was extricated from that door which fortune had thrown uppermost, and never actor surely made an appearance to more general applause. Next came "Friday"—that always unlucky *Friday*—to renewed, reiterated shouts. As to the goods which lay scattered around, the mob could make nothing of them, unless, as it was shrewdly suspected, it being about quarter day, the two wights were a pair of rascally Frenchmen running off with what they could pilfer, partly in disguise, and altogether in their landlord's debt. Notwithstanding this maladroitness proceeding,

by prompt assistance, and another coach “*post tot naufragia tutus*,” Farley reached Covent Garden both in time and safety.

The seeds of discord which had long been sown between Elliston and the Drury Committee, were now fast ripening, and a correspondence which ensued between the parties, terminated by the cancel of mutual articles. Elliston, whose tragedy was never first-rate, (for we would avoid that kind of biography which Dr. Dibdin says, is like epitaphs, nothing but praise,) was now immeasurably removed from the high position to which Kean had ascended ; but that *amour propre*, natural to all men, and so inseparable from those long accustomed to the voice of flattery, betrayed him into many fancied grievances, amongst other things, that he had been called on to play *Macduff* to the *Macbeth* of Mr. Kean—a mandate which he thought proper to resist. On Elliston’s refusing *Macduff*, a fine of 75*l.* was imposed, which he was compelled to pay.

The part of *Bolingbroke*, in “*Richard the Second*,” one to which he always expressed great disinclination, being soon after sent to him, placed the state of things beyond all doubt. A long paper war took place between Mr. Whitbread and the complainant. Whitbread’s final note was as follows :—

“*SIR*,—I received the honour of your statement, dated the 16th, and laid it before the Sub-Committee

of Management last week. It was yesterday taken into further consideration, and Mr. Ward will furnish you with the result. I beg to assure you I can have personally no unfriendly feeling towards you—there never has been any disposition in the management to degrade your professional talents or reputation, nor have there been any attempts made to “run you down” in their estimation, by any “bucaniers” whatever. But the propriety—the necessity, of the resolution of the Board of Management, I think you will at once acknowledge.

“I am, sir, your obedient servant,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Whitbread'.

“Dover Street, June 29, 1815.”

Elliston was super-grand throughout, in his correspondence with the great Dons on the Drury Committee, reminding us of an anecdote told by Baron de Grimm, of the elder Vestris in Paris. “This,” said the god of ballet, “is the first squabble of our house with the family of the Bourbons!” As for Elliston, he verily thought his retirement from the theatre would have an influence on the funds.

Meanwhile, at Birmingham, theatrical affairs wore but a gloomy aspect. Empty benches at night representations, and abundant dissensions at morning rehearsals, offered but a sorry remunerating prospect, whilst Elliston's ties in London, numer-

ous as those which bound the sleeping Gulliver on the shores of "Lilliput," withheld him from making a flying visit to the county of Warwick, and by a well-timed speech propitiating events. Added to this, Miss Norton, a very pet with the select few who still visited the Birmingham theatre, was delivered of a grievance, which being sworn to Elliston, excited the virtuous indignation of the whole town. Miss Norton certainly did every maternal justice to the bantling, for she nursed it with unremitting care, so that within a week it was as strong and vigorous as any base-born offspring in the county.

The tale ran thus :—Miss Norton had undertaken to join some cross country company, on a certain day, believing the Birmingham term would be over by that date ; but Elliston having extended his season for some extra number of nights, Miss Norton was thereby prevented fulfilling her new project. Miss Norton, hereupon, appeals to the Birmingham playgoers, who though beyond doubt benefited by the very protracted stay of their own favourite, took up her tort with that peculiar polish, for which this town has long been remarkable, and were loud in their vindication of an oppressed woman. The very walls of Birmingham itself were eloquent—"No Elliston"—"Norton for ever!"—"Down with the manager!" were the mural echoes of the Brummagem thunder.

Elliston, who was seldom taken by surprise, or if so, generally shewed himself to the best advantage,

made not the slightest notice of the little grievance in question, for he was far more interested that the mother and child should be doing well, as it is called, than might at first strike the dull understandings of some people; so that after a week's abuse, which had now covered every square foot of brick and mortar of this operative town, he stepped forward and generously announced a benefit for Miss Norton, whereby he regained all the popularity he had lost, and pocketed, moreover, by so attractive an advertisement, a good round sum, which, by the country usage of benefits, would fall indubitably to his share as manager.

All were presently good friends—Miss Norton was declared convalescent, and parted with her paramour, not without a secret understanding that this *heureuse couche* might not be their last effort together.

Charles Dignum, the soul of good humour, whose very face was the index of the man, for eight and twenty years a faithful servant to the Drury proprietary, was now cashiered by the new committee. He was, however, partially retained for his vocal assistance in full pieces, at a certain salary, which was amply repaid to the treasury by his benefit, which was always a sure card. Dignum's father had been a tailor, residing in Little Wild Street. Charles, having a peculiarly sweet voice, officiated as acolothist at the Sardinian

ambassador's chapel; it was here Linley heard him, and was so struck by his dulcet notes that he took him as apprentice.

Dignum appeared on the stage in 1784, in the part of *Young Meadows*, and soon after, in that of *Lord Aimworth*, a character for which, in one particular, he was peculiarly unfit, as Dignum's form was the most complete "figure of fun" ever witnessed, being perfectly spherical, and, supported by a pair of misproportioned legs, had the appearance of an orange poised on two peeled almonds, and headed by a prize cherry. Strange as it may appear, Dignum, with this ludicrous figure, was one of Kemble's "stock lords" in all tragedies, his name being affixed to the *Earl of Essex*, in "King John," *Sir Walter Blunt*, in "Henry the Fourth," *Sir Richard Vernon*, and the *Duke of Burgundy*, in "King Lear, &c.; it was a stipulation with Dignum that he should be cast in no part in tragedy that had not a title of distinction.

Dignum was the first of the vocalists who started that trading scheme, which has since proved so lucrative and agreeable to his fraternity—namely, singing for hire at public dinners. Dignum has been frequently known, at the Freemasons' Tavern, to eat two dinners, sing half a dozen songs, drink twice as many bumpers, and be well paid for the whole miscellaneous duties—a converse bit of

fortune, which, until his day, had fallen to the lot but of very few.

The Duke of Sussex presiding at a certain public dinner in the above hall, had been greatly delighted by the efforts of the vocalists present, and travelling a little out of the record of prescribed toasts, rose from his chair, and most graciously begged to propose the health of the corps musique. It became necessary that one of the party should acknowledge so gracious a compliment, but as much diffidence was the natural result of the occasion, amongst those concerned, the speech did not appear very readily forthcoming.

Dignum, who had quitted his place some minutes before, and was in fact absent during the Duke's short address, now returned, and totally unconscious of what had passed in the meanwhile, rose up, and in rather an altisonant key, called out for a decanter of water. This very naturally occasioned a burst of merriment in the whole party, who immediately followed it up by the cry, "Dignum, Dignum!—speech, speech!" Poor Dignum found himself in no enviable position—his grotesque figure, the decanter of water, and his perfect unconsciousness of the *point de l'affaire*, so distinguishable in his cherry countenance, by no means tended to the sobriety of his friends around him. A gracious token of recognition at this moment from the royal chairman operated but little to his relief. At

length, the matter being explained, Dignum, who had been some days previously supplied by an extra stanza to the national anthem, in compliment to the Duke of Sussex, which had, in fact, not been sung, very adroitly hit on the alternative; and instead of a speech, which he would have executed badly enough, he gave in exquisite melody the special stanza. The effect was happy.

The part of *Crop*, in "No Song no Supper," was positively Dignum's freehold. In this, no one could approach him, and his song, "Three years a sailor's life I led," was equally his own. Vauxhall never possessed a more powerful attraction than in Dignum. He was, perhaps, the greatest favourite who ever sang at this popular place of amusement. It was here a piece of fashion to know and converse with Dignum.

Dignum died in 1827. He was a Roman Catholic. High mass was performed at his obsequies, at the Sardinian ambassador's chapel, Lincoln's Inn Fields, when Mr. Samuel Wesley presided at the organ.

Dignum was a kind and amiable man, and, though extremely generous, died in good circumstances. In 1809, the name of his daughter excited much attention, she being the mother of Martha Horsley, who was trepanned from this country by a man named Rennett, for which offence he was sentenced to transportation.

Of Dignum's person, “ Anthony Pasquin ” maliciously writes :—

“ See Dignum trip onward, as *Cymon* array'd,
Both apish and awkward, unlearn'd and ill-made ;
’Tis wond’rous we find not in Opera’s van,
A single novice, who looks like a man.”

CHAPTER VI.

. A "Terminus"—The dwarf, Simon Paap—The Birmingham Exchequer—"The Bohemian"—An Ellistonian speech—Extraordinary effects—"This is the Stone!"—A Country Manager—Mr. Charles Martel Tomlinson—A practical joke—A perplexed artist—Vagaries—A perishing painter—Sewing on a button—Mrs. Allsop—Necessaries of life—The hen and chickens—A cozy supper—Retort courteous—Jeremy Collier—Prince of Pontus—A Philippic—Lord Byron—Children of poets.

IN the spring of this year, Elliston, in the name of another party, entered into negotiation with Mr. Barrett, proprietor of Vauxhall Gardens, for the purchase of that property; and which was so nearly concluded, that a check for the purchase-money (35,000*l.*) was actually drawn. Had this event finally taken place, Elliston (to whom the stewardship of London itself would not have appeared too burdensome) was to have been deputed manager of the concern; but, from some cause, the treaty, at the latest moment, was broken off.

A territorial *foiblesse* had, however, by this time taken full possession of him, and, baffled in his prospect of the extensive viceroyship, he determined on acquiring a principality of his own, and with

this view, bought a piece of land in the vicinity of Lambeth-walk, abutting on “The Three Jolly Gardeners.” For what purpose this purchase had been made, beyond whim, does not appear ; but no sooner was it concluded, and the conveyance made out, than he erected on the spot what he denominated “ a land-mark,” bearing the following cautionary inscription :—

THE BOUNDARY
OF
MR. ELLISTON'S LAND,
Vauxhall Walk — 1815.

This piece of absurdity cost him fifteen pounds.

No sooner erected was this terminus at Vauxhall, than Elliston was seized by a new and equally strange aberration of fancy. A Mr. Sampœman had just imported to London, for the purpose of public exhibition, a remarkable Dutch dwarf, Simon Paap, being only twenty-eight inches high, and weighing no more than twenty-seven pounds. Simon Paap was, in some respects, a more curious little object than “ General Tom Thumb,” for though not quite so small, he gave a more striking and amusing impression of a man in miniature, shewing himself “ Prime in manhood where youth ended,” being, in fact, twenty-six years of age, whilst a marked quizzicalness and extreme self-importance, rendered his *ensemble* highly diverting. He was accoutred in

the style of the old Dutch uniform at the period of the pensionary De Witt, and, surrounded by papers and writing material, he verily appeared to bear the states of Holland on his shoulders. Elliston entered into treaty, at the consideration of twenty-five guineas a week, for the liberty of exhibiting the little Dutchman, including the superintendence of M. Sampœman, whose person offered a striking contrast to his cousin, the dwarf.

Elliston then hired a room in Piccadilly, where Simon was to give audience to the public, and made a further engagement with a M. Louis Pyne, a fellow with a long-pointed moustache, like the antennæ of a reptile, to act as an interpreter between the Londoners and the little Batavian.

But the speculation turned out a failure. The Dutch ambassador's levees were but thinly attended; added to which, Simon Paap gave himself considerable airs, and, on one occasion, positively refused to appear, as some ladies, on the previous day, had greatly wounded his dignity by dancing him in the air, and behaving towards him very much as "Glumdalclitch" had treated our own countryman, "Gulliver." After about ten days, the agreement between Elliston and his Dutch friend was cancelled, the profits of the undertaking being as stunted as the little hero himself.

About a century ago, on the occasion of the nuptial of the Duke of Bavaria, at the court of Wirtemberg, a dwarf armed cap-a-pié, girt with a

sword, and loaded with martial emblazonry, was concealed in a pie, and the dish served up at the royal table. A due secrecy had been preserved, and the *coup* was highly successful. "When the pie was opened, the dwarf began to rise," and stepping out of the dish, with the utmost gravity, drew his sword, and traversing the table sundry times, with great martial demeanour, retired again to the pie, and was borne off as he came.

But less and less cheering were the movements at Birmingham, yet operating on Elliston, as drugs on certain constitutions—namely, in a directly opposite manner to their usual effects; for to his other liabilities he now suddenly added the Leicester, the Shrewsbury, and the Lynn Theatres, contriving occasionally to play at each of them himself. Like a bullet in the air, there was no discovering his track until execution.

The Birmingham exchequer was becoming shakey—a drunken account, which could hardly keep a balance—and it was now that Elliston played off many of those eccentricities by which his memory has been so signalized. Frequently did he hazard undertakings with the public, where there was scarcely a probability of keeping his word; and more than once has it been suspected, he had advertised "stars" for appearance, with which he had never entered into the slightest consultation. He resorted to expedients in which the

discreditable-ness was pardoned in the humour of the conceit, and the offence escaped in the merriment which followed. Knowing, if he lost popularity to-day, he could whistle it back to-morrow, Elliston hesitated at no exploit, however wild, to fill his building for a single night. In some instances, the public had their own credulity to blame as much as the manager's effrontery, for the “ Bottle Conjurer ” of Foote could not have outstripped some of his vagaries.*

Of these *Fourberies d'Elliston*, one of the most remarkable was the manager's announcement of a “ Bohemian, of unexampled Strength and Stature,” who, amongst other evolutionary feats, would display his facile management of a huge stone, of near a ton weight, which he was to handle like a tennis-ball! “The Bohemian” was stated as having been received with favour and distinction in various Rhenish States, and had actually felled an ox by a blow of his naked fist to lighten the *ennui* of a German princess.

The *Bohemian*, “ Begot of nothing but vain phantasy,” being, in other words, the offspring of the manager's imagination, might indeed fairly have been denominated a prodigy, and one who had also several brothers and sisters of the same quality. Typical of himself, the “ Bohemian ” was advertised

* The anecdote of the fireworks has been so frequently and so variously told, that we forbear its insertion in these pages.

in gigantic letters, while sundry portraits, which had been originally executed for the proprietors of the "Saracen's Head" inn, London, were placarded about the town, with the sub-lineation, "THE BOHEMIAN!" in the place of "Snow Hill."

The Birmingham people, who were beginning to sicken at tragedy, and had waggishly chalked on the stage-door of the theatre, "Mangling done here," were wonderfully revived by this extimulation—the Bohemian, with his fist, was certainly "a hit," and the edifice was as full on the night of his promised appearance, as though the Emperor of Austria himself had been expected.

The play, "Pizarro," had but a poor chance—the apathy, which at another time would have been its meed, was now kindled into impatience, and "The Bohemian! The Bohemian!" from the tongues of the spectators, completely drowned the words of the actors, which, with considerable foresight, they had only half studied for the occasion. Down fell the curtain, and "The Bohemian!" instantaneously broke out with fresh violence, as when, at a conflagration, the crackling roof tumbles into the yawning furnace beneath. Fitted to the occasion, as it was conceived, the fiddlers struck up "The Battle of Prague," and every nerve was now attuned to the pancratic efforts which had been promised.

At this juncture, Elliston, pale with consternation and labouring under a distress of mind, which would have extorted pity from the original Saracen

himself, stepped forward, and, with suppliant palms, addressed the assembly :—

“ The Bohemian has deceived me,” said he —“ *that* I could have pardoned, but he has deceived my friends—he has deceived *you*—you, who have ever been kind, liberal, and confiding”—at which last word he buried his face in his handkerchief, but to hide what emotion, we will not hazard a guess. “ The Bohemian, I repeat, has deceived us—he is not here ”—a certain smouldering now agitated the body of spectators. Elliston went on—“ And the man, of whatever name or nation he may be, who violates his word, commits an offence which ——” here an outbreak took place which completely annihilated the rest of his aphoristic sentence. He then proceeds :

“ Anxious for your gratification, and grateful for your patronage, I entered into correspondence with the faithless foreigner, who was this day to have appeared——” a yell which, in another place, would be denominated *ironical cheers*. “ The correspondence, ladies and gentlemen, is in my pocket.” An incredulous laugh. “ I’ll read it to you.” Here he produced a variety of papers resembling letters. (“ Read ! read !—No ! no !—Imposition !”) “ Here they are,” continued Elliston, with one of his most cunning looks ; “ does any gentleman present, read German ?—if so, would he honour me by stepping forward ? ” A scream of merriment. “ Am I, left alone ? then I’ll translate it for

you." ("No! no! enough! Go it, Elliston!")

"To your will I obey; the correspondence shall not be read"—here he deliberately replaced the documentary bundle in his pocket—"but, ladies and gentlemen," continued he, with a smile which could have levelled the Andes, "as proof of my own sincerity and the fulfilment of my undertaking, the stone—the stone is *here!* *You shall see it!*"

A volcanic burst. "You shall yet be satisfied—you are my patrons, and have a right to demand it. Shall the stone be produced?" (Cries of "The stone! the stone!") Here the manager winked his grey eye at the fiddlers, who again hastily betook themselves to "The Battle of Prague," when up sprang the curtain, disclosing a sand-rock, which, for weight and magnitude, could positively have made "Bohemia nothing!" and bearing a scroll, "*This is the Stone!*"

"Then grasp'd Tydides in his hand a stone,
A bulk immense, which not two men could bear,
As men are now——"

All presently was exultation. Good humour, even confidence, seemed restored. Here was indeed *the stone*, and imagination did all the rest. The good people, though they could not recal Guy Earl of Warwick, had yet gazed upon his porridge-pot, and felt an equal delight with the old wife, who held the Lord Mayor as idle, after having seen his

eight footmen. But Elliston had not yet done. The kaleidos of his fancy was still at work—his gratitude suggested further concessions, and again he came forward :

“ If there be any lady or gentleman,” said he, “ who may still feel disappointment, I beg respectfully to say that a box ticket will be delivered, on application of the party at the office of this establishment, for any evening during the week, which, on the surrender of one shilling, will admit the party *free* !” (Cries of “ Bravo, bravo, Elliston !”) Thus, like the quack who promised every inhabitant of the town a present of sixpence, by selling his nostrum for a similar sum, which he declared honestly worth a shilling, Elliston secured a small account for a future night, which probably never else would have found its way within the doors of the Birmingham Theatre.

But that the public sometimes deserve to be gulled, the following fact will show :—About the year 1792, one Briscoe, the manager and hero of the Staffordshire company of comedians, was struck with blindness. His theatrical labours had not been greatly successful, and now all hope appeared to have left him of doing any good either for himself or family. He still, however, fancied he could act ; and, in a fit of despair, announced to the public that, although being stone blind, he would play *Tamer-*

lane on one night, and *Oroonoko* on the following Thursday. On the first occasion Mr. Briscoe had a crowded audience, and on the Thursday the house was far too small to contain his admirers. All the world now flocked to see the blind actor, who was far more indebted to the loss of his eyes than all the foresight of his former days.

It was during the same brief visit at this town that Elliston, on a certain morning, was interrupted by a smartish rap at his chamber door, and a figure, with extreme pertness of mien and that peculiarity of attire, which only a genius has courage to exhibit, presented himself. His face was white as the pole of a Romford calf, over which a quantity of black hair perpendicularly trickled, from which, ever and anon, he liberated his lack-lustre eyes by a dash of his finger. Though a seedy coxcomb, still, like *Sir Fopling Flutter*, he would fain declare a looking-glass the best of company.

“ You will pardon me, Mr. Elliston,” lisped he, “ this intrusion, but I have just dropped in——”

“ Ay, and a drop too much, my friend,” responded the wondering comedian.

“ I have just ventured,” continued he, with a perseverance but ill suited to his language—“ to beg—to request—I am, in short, an artist; my name is Charles Martel Tomlinson—have been unprecedentedly happy in many portraits during my sojourn—and pardon my application which I make,

for permission to give the world a portrait of Mr. Elliston."

"To paint me!" replied Elliston, throwing himself back in his chair, with appalling majesty—"to paint me!" repeated he, calling up the dignity of the whole 'acting drama' into his countenance.

"Such is my ambition," continued the youth, with the valour he had hired for the occasion, being well aware, "*verecundia inutilis viro egenti*"—"such is my most ardent desire—I paint nature in the extreme! Permit me to lay before you a few specimens of my late successes," saying which, he produced from under his arm a tawdry portfolio, and first parting his black tresses from his tallow visage, disclosed sundry daubs which he laid one by one, on the table.

"This," said he, "is the Rev. Mr. Cole, minister of the Baptist chapel in —— street; this the lady of Mr. Knox, the brassfounder, who has published some pretty specimens, both in prose and verse; this, the likeness of a child who was found drowned in the Avon—life itself, Mr. Elliston," and on he went, chattering with wonderful volubility, till at length his ideas were completely lost, like acquaintances in a crowd.

Elliston, who was at this moment surrounded by papers relative to his correspondence with Douglas Kinnaird, on the question of the Drury Lane management, and being anxious to preserve copies of

sundry letters which had passed, with that quick *aperçus* both of humour and profit, having fully resolved his friend should not paint him, who could himself “ Scatter his Maker’s image o’er the land,” determined at least to turn him to some advantage ; —as the prisoner we have heard of at Algiers, who, being unfit for any kind of noble labour, was commanded to squat down day after day to hatch young turkeys.

Turning suddenly on the artist, as he held out the “Drowned Boy” at the extent of his arm, “Dexterous at your pencil,” observed Elliston ; “do you write a good hand ?”

“ ’Tis an inferior part of my profession,” responded the genius, with a shallying advance, like one trying the pavement on a frosty morning ; “I consent to teach it at academies.”

“ Ay,” replied Elliston, “ that young ladies may wrap up their secrets in triangular billets, like an ounce of snuff.”

Here the genius smiled, shewed his teeth, and parted his hair.

The manager having discharged his wit, proceeded—

“ Could I entrust you with the autograph documents of a distinguished functionary ?” demanded he, measuring with his eye the slip of humanity which stood before him. “ Here are certain letters which require attention, confidence, and

despatch. I see you are an uncommon man. Here, take my chair; this is no *bagatelle*. Sit down, young man; you will find writing material in abundance. It is necessary, copies of these letters should be preserved," continued he, in a most pregnant whisper, "and you shall have the distinction of transcribing them." Having said which, Elliston took the genius by the hand, whose countenance displayed the most grotesque effects of unforeseen pleasure and sudden excitement; and placing him at the table, at once fixed him to work.

"I am truly flattered," faltered the youth. "I—I am indeed sensible——"

"I hope so," impressively interrupted Elliston: "here are the originals," continued he, emphatically laying his hand on the letters; "but, remember, confidence and despatch!" Having uttered which, and again assuring the puzzled painter it was no *bagatelle*, Elliston, with overpowering solemnity strode out of the apartment.

Being now left to himself, the artist, it may be concluded, settled to his task, the extent of which only operated, perhaps, as a confirmation of the distinction which had just been offered to him; whilst the frequent recurrence of noble names, at that time forming the committee of Drury Lane Theatre, produced a gratification as he proceeded with his pen, which completely dispelled all sense of labour.

In about three hours Charles Martel had finished the most extensive sketch he had ever undertaken, and, as it was now about two o'clock, he began to look with some anxiety for the comedian's return.

Stretching his cramped fingers, and grinning under the ten thousand "pins and needles," which recalled his right leg from a long sleep, he ventured to hobble up and down the apartment, while he pleased his imagination by the variety of styles in which the actor might be painted. Three o'clock, and no return of Elliston: half-past three—four o'clock, and not the slightest indication of his approach. The artist became uneasy; for though his thoughts were full, his stomach was empty; the identical hour having long past, for that solitary meal which usually carried him through the natural day.

He approached the door, and venturing to lay his hand on the lock, found, to his dismay, that it was fastened. It was now nearly five o'clock; his bright prospects began to put on the nature of dissolving views; for his sensations were wondrously changed. Under that all potent sense, which is said, will actually break through stone walls, the artist pulled courageously at the bell. Ten minutes had proved him still patient; when, again and again, he applied himself to that, which has often given refuge to despair—namely,

the rope ; again he pulled it, when a voice from the other side of the door demanded, " What do you want ? "

" Want !—want ! my good woman—I have wanted these three hours—to get out."

" Who are you ? who are you ? "

" Mr. Charles Martel Tomlinson, the artist. Pray, my good woman, open the door."

" Open the door !—lard, lard ! Mr. Elliston has locked it and put the key in his pocket."

" Impossible ! my good lady : when will he return ? "

" It's very uncertain with him always, sir ; but I don't think he'll be home to-night."

" Not to night ?—why I'm starving—besides which, I want to come out : pray force the lock."

" Force the lock ! why it's more than my place is worth to do it."

" And as much as my life is worth to remain here," cried the artist. " I am exhausted—starving, I tell you."

" I can't a' help you, sir : perhaps you can find something to do till master comes back."

" To do ! why I have done it, and thoroughly exhausted I am, too. For mercy's sake, a sandwich—a cup of tea ! " Here the youth listened for a reply ; but, to his further dismay, heard only the retiring steps of his unseen visitor, as she, murmuring, descended the staircase.

In what state of mind was now the imprisoned secretary, can only be imagined. He applied, probably, to the window, but its elevation from the ground totally denied his escape ; unless, indeed, he would sell his neck for the satisfaction of his belly.

Six o'clock had already struck. The amanuensis was probably frantic, and fifteen minutes more had expired, when a step on the landing without, announced the approach of some one. With a beating at his heart, and a bitter gnawing beneath it, he listened—the bolt was slipped back, and Elliston himself, with the same solemnity in which he had quitted, now stalked into the apartment.

“ Well, sir,” said he, “ have you finished the job ? This is no bagatelle.”

“ No, sir—indeed,” responded the whey-faced youth, “ I had hoped—expected——”

“ Hah ! this is admirable !” cried Elliston, approaching the table—“ you have indeed fulfilled your trust most worthily. I have not broken in on you prematurely.”

“ Prematurely ! not, indeed, Mr. Elliston,”—here the artist stroked his eye-brows, by his habitual dash of finger. “ I rather looked for your return, but seeing no sign——”

“ You might have painted one,” muttered the manager.

At this Mr. Tomlinson smiled, shewed his teeth, and parted his hair. “ Might I now suggest,

Mr. Elliston," said he, "the favour of your fixing some morning for a short—brief sitting, which ——"

"One, two, three," repeated Elliston to himself, (as he took severally up the neatly-executed copies of his correspondence with Kinnaird)—"four, five ——"

"A sitting—*en passant*, I might say," continued Charles Martel—"which should not interfere with your more ——"

"Seven, eight"—still continued Elliston. "This could not have been better accomplished. Why your hand-writing is very like Sir Benjamin West's."

"I know your engagements are abundant," persevered the limner, elevating his voice one octave, "but still ——"

"Ten, and one more—ah! here it is—eleven."

"I was just now venturing to request ——"

"One moment, and we will enter fully on the matter," again interrupted Elliston, when, opening a side door, he passed into another room.

Ten minutes—a quarter of an hour had elapsed, and the dissolving views were once more busy before the mental vision of the famishing academician, when Elliston, half-dressed, as though preparing for a late dinner, abruptly re-entered. Advancing, in his own manner, he said, with solemnity—

"Do you think you could sew on a button?"

"A button, sir?" repeated the painter.

"Ay, sew on a button, as adroitly as Mr. Law-

rence." Here Mr. Charles Martel Tomlinson smiled, shewed his teeth, and parted his hair.

" I—I—never tried."

" Then you shall. Hark ye," pursued Elliston, lowering his tone—" I would not have put so much faith in the President of the Royal Academy as I have this day reposed in you. This is no bagatelle, Mr. Tomlinson. Thread—needle—the button ; and here the waistcoat. I'll be painted in that waistcoat ;" having uttered which, he placed the whole tailoring implements before the obfuscated artist, and, gliding into his dressing-room, once more left his tailor-secretary at work.

The artist now cottoned to his thread—set his fingers to their new duty, and in five minutes this job also was completed.

Elliston reappeared. Taking his waistcoat, he impressively pronounced his friend an uncommon man, and being presently completely dressed—said, " Now, sir, to business. To save time, we will walk, and deliberate as we proceed."

At length Tomlinson was truly and thoroughly delighted. Picking up his specimens, he thrust the Rev. Gentleman and the Drowned Boy into his portfolio, and sticking closely to Elliston, who had now taken up his hat, prepared to follow him. Together they descended the staircase, and on arriving in the street, a carriage was in attendance, into which the comedian silently stepped, with an awe

and majesty far surpassing any of his former exhibitions.

Without deigning a glance at his companion, whom he left in a state of wonderment on the pavement, Elliston was by two minutes out of sight, and within twenty, had altogether forgotten that such a being as Charles Martel Tomlinson was in existence.

This, to all appearance, was but a heartless piece of conduct, but we verily believe the eccentricity of the fancy rather prompted the enterprise than any wish to mortify an inoffensive young man. Self-applause was all our hero could acquire from the joke, for no one was by to witness its result. Elliston was fond of relating the anecdote, yet always with the good taste of confessing it was an unfeeling exhibition of stage play.

Amongst the heavenly bodies, which at this period were noticed in the Brummagem hemisphere, was the luminary, Allsop, daughter of Mrs. Jordan. The lady certainly possessed dramatic talent, displaying—

“ ————— the whole manner
And copy of the *mother*—eyes, nose, lip,
Trick of her smile.”

A copy which nature herself had designed, rather than the result of laboured imitation.

In one particular, however, Mrs. Allsop was an

original, as respects the parent, for she was one of the most thoughtless and extravagant women in a profession never remarkable as a school of prudence.

During her sojourn, in the spring, at the above town, Mrs. Allsop took up her quarters at the “ Hen and Chickens,” and, at the expiration of three weeks, her “ little account ” amounted to 40*l*. Feeling “ astonished beyond measure ” at this sum total, for the mere necessities of a lone woman, Mrs. Allsop applied to Elliston to tax the bill. On investigation it appeared the *menage* had been ordered as follows :—Breakfast, composed of a roast chicken (one perhaps especially picked from the firm), ham, eggs, boiled mushrooms, honey, and Scotch cake ; this was followed by a meridian luncheon of cold partridge and noyeau, which two meals constituted the first act of the Lenten day, before rehearsal at the theatre. At four o’clock Mrs. Allsop dined—a repast, whereof “ the order of the course ” consisted of all delicacies of the season, and expensive specialties. The hot lobster was charged six shillings ; the cool cucumber, four ; the diurnal bottle of Madeira, ten ; and the port wine, seven ; fresh strawberries and preserved cherries had due consideration.

After the play, Mrs. Allsop supped—supper was her “ favourite meal,” for she had more time for its discussion. Broiled kidneys, grilled bones, and brandy and water, were deemed sustaining after

the excitement of acting; and, on one occasion, Mrs. Allsop having found herself indisposed, a few extra articles were in requisition.

The Hen and Chickens had also occasionally produced a coach and horses for jaunts and excursions. Mrs. Allsop's chamber was daily supplied with exotics of the rarest quality, amidst which were scattered—

"———— Violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath,"

and at night the wasted actress entertained the blue devils of indigestion

"——— On a bed,
On purpose trimmed up for Semiramis."

On a review of these things, Elliston looked rather gravely at the question of appeal, but, as he never left any undertaking altogether bootless, he sought an interview with the landlord, with whom, if he did not raise any demur respecting Mrs. Allsop's debt of 40*l.*, he, at least, took the opportunity of securing a reciprocation of patronage for the lady's coming benefit; in which the manager himself would share equally with the fair appellant.

It would be unjust perhaps to charge upon Elliston any participation in these sumptuary offences, from the fact of being on one occasion the lady's guest, by invitation, at supper—a friendly *tête-a-tête*

after their mutual exertions in the "Honeymoon." The supper service was in all particulars multiplied by two; one dish actually containing ten lamb chops. Elliston, who was never a great eater, however he might have distinguished himself in the more generous department of conviviality, was soon satisfied, and although nine-tenths of the dish fell to the lady's share, he bore a more gallant part in the Madeira and Punch *à la Romaine*. Wine and the witching hour seldom failed in their effects with our hero, and though he and the lady might differ in their peculiar notions of *substantial* bliss, yet they mutually agreed, the moment was happy, and seemed equally of the same mind to prolong it.

With a lady so liberal in her favours, it was scarcely possible to ask too much; and Elliston, who was inclined rather "To feast on the white wonder of dear Allsop's hand" than the fricassee chicken, was beginning to carve for himself. But the lady had been taught better, and some conversation having passed respecting dramatic operations to come, she rose up, and with considerable stage effect pronounced, "When you are eligible, Mr. Elliston."

"Eligible! madam," replied our hero—"Love is impatient of all distinctions, and makes a footman speak with the eloquence of Phœbus—eligible!"

"When you are manager of Drury Lane Theatre."

"Of that, madam, now know I'm resolved. In the meantime, take the security of my affections."

“ You must first clear off some of the mortgages on that estate,” replied she, laughing. “ Of the two I’d much rather take the first chance.”

“ Take it then, and as I live —— ”

“ I may trust you ? ”

“ You may indeed,” repeated Elliston, passionately, as he again seized the hand of the lady.

“ Then it were ungrateful, were my pledge to you less warm. You, sir, may trust me. Will you lend me ten pounds ? ”

“ Madam ! ”

“ Let us open the account with that. Nay, nay—no consideration ! ”

“ The *consideration*, madam, is positively indispensable,” added he, with a twinkle.

“ Well, then,” said she, laughing at the rich comedy he threw into his address, “ you will have more leisure to reflect, the sooner you advance the money. Recollect,” added she with great gravity, “ my credit has been at a greater risk in your company than a ten-pound note is likely to be in my pocket. But, look you—here is your security”—saying which, Mrs. Allsop produced a letter addressed to her by a gentleman, at that time highly distinguished in the brilliant world, announcing that a remittance of cash would be at her disposal within a few days. This promised despatch Mrs. Allsop empowered Elliston to open, after her departure from Birmingham, and thereby repay himself. On these terms, the ten pounds

were served up, with one more rummer at parting.

Mrs. Allsop quitted Birmingham. The expected letter duly arrived, and Elliston, availing himself of the permitted mode of recovering his money, broke the seal, and having satisfied his debt, forwarded the remainder to the lady at Worcester.

Mrs. Allsop made her first appearance at Covent Garden Theatre in 1815, and in 1817 she signed articles with the Drury Lane proprietors for two years, at 12*l.* per week. When Elliston became manager of Drury Lane Theatre, as he had prognosticated, he had no great desire to engage Mrs. Allsop as an actress; and as he now felt an inclination, even less, for availing himself of those immunities to which he had now become "eligible," Mrs. Allsop was seen no more in London.

In the year 1820, this lady proceeded to New York, the American journals stating her to be the *grand-daughter of the King of Britain*. On the following year Mrs. Allsop died in the same city, by incautiously taking an over portion of laudanum.

Elliston was subject, during this season at Birmingham, to furious attacks from the pulpits of certain chapels, very similar to those of Rowland Hill; which also, like them, produced him much pecuniary advantage. Agitation of this kind certainly does good—Jeremy Collier realized a great

deal of money from his book, in his day, and the playhouses were constantly full. Yet Collier, it must be confessed, did not write without some show of justice, recollecting the tendency of the drama in his time, and knowing that Dryden was the principal object of his attack. It is curious, however, to recollect that Sir Richard Steele complains that one of his plays was nearly damned through its morality; and a recent essayist has said, "If I am to hear a sermon, let me have it from the proper place; but do not spoil my evening's pleasure by giving it from the stage."

The following recital, though perhaps not new to many of our readers, may not here be unacceptable:

A barbarian prince, who came from Pontus to the court of Nero, amongst other entertainments which the Roman was so fond of exhibiting, beheld a dancer who so intelligently expressed the sentiment he meant to convey, by pantomime alone, that the stranger prince perfectly understood his gesticulative language. The foreigner, now about to return, and being asked what he would have as a present, replied, "Give me that dancer." Nero answered, "Of what use would he be?" "My neighbour barbarians," said the other, "are of different languages, and it is difficult to find them a common interpreter—but this fellow speaks an universal language; in the clear expressions of his pantomime, he will explain all the parties require."

Far different were the sentiments which agitated the pulpit orator at Birmingham. Not content with merely preaching against the fancied evil tendency of stage plays from his pulpit, he assailed our hero in the public streets, and, on one occasion, even threatened him with violence. Well might he have been designated the John *Knocks* of stage reformers.

Amongst other threatening notices forwarded to the manager of the Birmingham Theatre, the following extract from Baron Grimms' "Historical Recollections," was enclosed—supposed to have been favoured by the preacher in question. Beaumarchais' opera, "Figaro," had been advertised for representation.

The communication was as follows :

" M. le Chevalier de Langeac thus speaks :

" I saw yesterday the extravagant novelty of the day, which, triumphing over the police, profanes the dramas of the French. In this impudent play, every actor is a vice! ' Bartholo,' is *Avarice*; ' Almaviva,' *Seduction*; his tender rib, *Adultery*; ' Doublemain,' *Theft*; ' Marcelline,' a *Fury*; ' Basil,' *Calumny*; ' Fanchette,' *Innocence on its way to Seduction*; ' Cherubin,' *Libertinism*; ' Sason,' *Craft*; and as for ' Figaro,' the droll, he so perfectly represents his patron, that the likeness makes me start; in short, all the vices of humanity may be seen together, and the pit, with one assent, calling for the author!"

In December of this year, Lady Byron was delivered of a daughter, on which occasion the bard was addressed, both in the public prints and under cover, by innumerable lines, stanzas, odes, and sonnets, some of which he fancied had emanated from the rich *Pierian* streams of Drury Lane. On one evening Lord Byron brought with him, to the Green-room, one of these productions, which he playfully criticised with the view, no doubt, of ascertaining the author, whom he then shrewdly suspected.

On the birth of this daughter, one of the journals had the following observations :—" It is a remarkable thing, that hardly any of the race on record have left posterity. Scarcely a single ancient poet, from all that can be gathered, had children. Homer, none—Anacreon, none—Pindar, none—Theocritus, Æschylus, Euripides, Menander, Virgil, Horace, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, Lucan, Lucretius—none of them, any. It appears to have been the same, as far as posterity at least was concerned, with the Italian Poets. Dante had none ; Tasso had none ; Ariosto and Petrarch had natural children—the latter a son who plagued him prodigiously, but the race has failed. Then for our great countrymen, their posterity seems to have failed in the second or third generation. Chaucer's did ; so did Shakspeare's, so did Milton's. Pope, Dryden, Young, Gray, Collins, Shenstone, Lord Surrey, Ben

Jonson, Carew, Denham, Sandys, Waller, Beaumont and Fletcher, Akenside, Churchill, Goldsmith, Otway, Garth, Parnell, Prior, Congreve, Gay, Thomson, Rochester, Butler, Cowper, &c. &c.—none of them, children ! The only families even that have maintained their name collaterally are the Parnells and Drydens—both of them, by the way, Baronets.

“ It is suspected, however, we believe, that there may be descendants living of one poet, whose name would make up for a thousand ; we mean Spenser. *Sylvanus* Spense, his grandson, in the time of Steele and Addison, who interested themselves for him, obtained from Government a part of the poet’s lands, which had been lost during the troubles in Ireland. The families of the living poets, we trust, will be more fortunate. All of them, we believe, of any eminence, have had children:—Campbell, Coleridge, Moore, Scott, Southey, Wordsworth, and now Byron. Mr. Moore lost a little girl, a short time since, but he has two others ; and there is something in the idea of a *poet’s daughter*, which carries a charm with it beyond even the usual claims of the sex. These also are the finest of titles ; and Lord Byron will aggrandize his posterity more by his name in the republic of letters, than if he had gathered about it all the ribbands and coronets in the bestowal of courts.”

CHAPTER VII.

Elliston plays harlequin—Attack on the Olympic—Memorial of the proprietors of the two theatres, respecting the infringement of the licences of the Olympic and Sans Pareil—Elliston in reply—Introductory letter to Elliston's pamphlet—Curious letters—Theatrical convocation—Interior of Olympic re-built—Resignation of the Birmingham Theatre—American Rossini—Colman—Stephen Kemble—Lord Byron's statement—Drury Lane Theatre to be let—Candidates—Elliston accepted.

ELLISTON had been acting, during some part of this season, at the Leicester Theatre, which he rented at 157*l.* per annum; and he now took leave of the audience by one of the most memorable of his oratorical displays.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said he, "the painful moment of our separation has arrived. That I have been indulgent to you, there is no denying—some say I have spoilt you—but I will not pause to weigh my frailty towards those to whom I am so attached. It was in this city, ladies and gentlemen, that that remarkable character, Cardinal Wolsey, laid down his glory and his bones. Can I do better than employ his words in honour of our present illustrious Regent? 'He is a prince of a most royal carriage, and hath a princely heart;' to this let me add, God bless him!

“Ladies and gentlemen, in my general acknowledgments for the favour I have received in this town, let me not forget Mrs. Buntingfield, a name which I have observed not less than six times in the box list this season. Should Mrs. Buntingfield be now present—ay—there she sits in the red turban,” (continued the orator, pointing humorously to a side box), “let me express my warmest gratitude!

“If, in returning you thanks in my professional capacity, I may be permitted, for a moment, to allude to private ties, I would remind you that your late worshipful mayor, Mr. Wilcox, and myself, were schoolfellows. His loss not even you yourselves can deplore more than I do, and now ‘beyond that bourne from which no traveller returns,’ we have only to hope that he is happy!” (Here the orator wiped his eyes). “Ladies and gentlemen, once again, I bid you respectfully—affectionately, farewell!”

It was during this short season at Leicester that Elliston, out of whim rather than necessity, played the part of *Harlequin* in a pantomime farce, hastily prepared. Some difference having taken place between himself and the actor who was to have sustained this important character, led to the circumstance. Elliston, in a speech—as a matter of

Mary Ann Elliston, born November 10th, 1817.

course, explained the defection of the party whom he had engaged for the above impersonation, but that, a gentleman would be found, at the short notice, to undertake it. That gentleman was himself; and roars of laughter he produced by his impromptu fun and pragmatic movements.

“Deserting wit for low grimace and jest,
Or showing Terence in a motley vest.”

In fact he was the entire pantomime, and no one was a bit the wiser respecting the real magician.

Elliston's impersonation was not merely of agility and dancing, to both of which he was equal, but fun and humour. In the Italian comedy, *Harlequin* is an intellectual buffoon. The name, we understand, to have been taken from a comedian who came to Paris under Henry III., who, frequenting the house of M. D. Harley, was called by his companions “*Harlequino*”—Little Harley.

Elliston had always an idea that his presence inspired a certain degree of awe in the minds of his spectators, and that there was often an “*afflatus*” about him which at once enforced subjection and respect. It has been said of the celebrated Le Kain, that a Russian of great literary renown was so struck by the majesty of his appearance that he actually rose from his seat, and bowed with reverence whenever he appeared on the stage. This, which was far more likely to have produced a laugh

than admiration, would have been no unsuitable burlesque reproof to Elliston, in some of his turgid moments.

In March, 1818, the Drury Lane sub-committee, in conjunction with the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre, made another attack on Elliston, but that it might not appear an *argumentum ad se ipsis-simum*, in their memorial to the lord chamberlain, they made the Sans Pareil a co-defendant—a place, at that time, too insignificant for any serious consideration. The object of the memorialists was now not merely to curtail these minor theatres, but to cut them off entirely. To be expunged, like the kingdom of the Poles, from the dramatic chart, was a measure to which Elliston was not likely quietly to submit, and, like another *Thaddeus*, he fearlessly vindicated his claims. This he did by the publication of a very able pamphlet in reply, and so clear a case did he make out, that with all the partiality by which the chamberlain was evidently willing to support the despots, he could not but grant the obvious justice to the oppressed; and the great potentates were consequently defeated.

We offer a copy of the memorial itself, and Elliston's first letter, addressed to the lord chamberlain, some few days before the publication of the abler pamphlet to which we have alluded :

MEMORIAL, ETC.

The joint Memorial of the Proprietors of the two Theatres of DRURY LANE and COVENT GARDEN, to his Majesty's Lord Chamberlain, the Most Noble the Marquis of Hertford, against the infringement and abuse of the Licences of the Proprietors of the OLYMPIC AND SANS PAREIL THEATRES.

MY LORD,—Engaged, as your memorialists are, in the arduous duties of managing and supporting the interests of their large and immensely expensive establishments, your lordship may be assured, that they would not willingly, or without cause, take up your lordship's time, by again urging their well-founded complaints against the proprietors of the Olympic and Sans Pareil Theatres, acting under the lord chamberlain's licence ; but they are now compelled to do so, as, since their last remonstrance, (when your memorialists were promised redress) these theatres have continued still further and further to abuse their licences, till at length they have become theatres for the performance of the regular drama, as your lordship will find fully demonstrated in the enclosed letter to Mr. Larpent, your lordship's licenser, who (as your lordship will perceive) has been at a loss where to apply for the licence for the tragedy of " Fazio,"—whether at Covent Gar-

den Theatre or at the Olympic, where that tragedy was previously performed.

With these broad facts before them, and the evidence they can produce that the regular drama is now nightly performing at the above-mentioned theatres, your lordship must excuse the alarm of the proprietors of the two patent theatres, who, at once, see their long dreaded fears realized, and who find their long-established patent rights destroyed, upon the faith of which, a million of money has been of late years embarked in their two theatres. Your memorialists would be very sorry to question the power of the lord chamberlain's licence. They are well aware that it emanates from a branch of the royal prerogative, which is exercised by the royal will, or by the authority of the lord chamberlain ; but, my lord, is it not a circumstance, as strange as it is true, that these same patent rights, which, through a long series of years ever since their grant from King Charles, have been graciously protected and supported " by the royal will," should now be swept away " by the authority of the lord chamberlain ?"

Your lordship may recollect that, when some years ago, his Majesty was solicited for a patent for the Haymarket Theatre, that it was refused, on the principle that the grant would be unjust to the patent rights of the two winter theatres. That, when again a patent was applied for by a powerful body of persons for a third theatre,

the request was referred to the privy council, where it was fully argued, and it was there determined that the grant would be unjust to the patent rights of the two winter Theatres. When the subject was afterwards brought before parliament, it was there thrown out on the same grounds. And when lately his Royal Highness the Prince Regent was petitioned by Mr. Arnold, for an annual licence for the Lyceum Theatre, the matter was referred by his Royal Highness's orders to the secretary of state's office, and the opinion of the law officers of the crown was taken, which was decidedly in favour of the preservation of the patent rights of the two winter theatres; yet these patent rights, thus solemnly recognised by these highest authorities in the realm, are now shaken to the foundation by the grant of the lord chamberlain's licences.

Before the time of Lord Dartmouth, no lord chamberlain conceived that he possessed such extraordinary powers. When the late Earl of Hertford was lord chamberlain, and as lately as when the Marquis of Salisbury held that high office, so delicate was the granting of even any temporary licence, that might injure the regular theatres, then esteemed, that his lordship never granted a licence for one night till the consent of the regular theatres was first obtained. But now besides to these two theatres (the subject of your memorialists' complaint) licences of every description, to every person, and to every place, are freely granted at the

lord chamberlain's office ; and whether it be for a play, or a farce, a dance, a gathering, or a French actor, no objections are made. Your lordship may, perhaps, feel averse to alter any act of your immediate predecessor ; but even Lord Dartmouth himself would have been the first to put a stop to such daring infringements of his licences. His lordship never contemplated, that when he granted Mr. Astley a licence for the Olympic, to keep his horses from the time of the closing to the opening of his amphitheatre, that he was granting a licence to play such a tragedy as "Fazio;" nor did he think, when he granted a licence to Mr. Scott, for his daughter, Miss Scott, to perform in burlettas, that he was granting him a power of engaging a regular company of comedians to perform whatever pieces they may choose ; for thus (as we find) the term, "burletta," is now construed at these Theatres. But it can easily be proved, that burletta is distinguished from tragedy, comedy, opera, farce, &c., by its being a piece in verse, accompanied by music : for example, the pieces of the "Dragon of Wantley," "Midas," "The Golden Pippin," "Poor Vulcan," copies of which are herewith sent, are burlettas ; and totally different from the pieces acted at these theatres, which are neither more nor less than pieces of the regular drama.

Your lordship can scarcely be aware of the serious and nightly injury your memorialists are sustaining from the performances of these two theatres. It can

be proved by evidence (affixed to this memorial) that a sum upon an average exceeding 150*l.* is nightly taken at their doors ; the whole, or the greatest part of which is taken from the doors of the two patent theatres ; for, my lord, there is but a certain proportion of money in this, or any other city which is expended upon theatrical amusements, and when 150*l.* nightly is thrown into other theatres, the two patent theatres are deprived of their chance of profit, and the means of supporting the dignity of the national drama.

If any further proof of this be wanting, it may be found in a neighbouring country. A commission was, a short time ago, appointed at Paris, to inquire into the cause of the degradation of their national drama ; and it was found that it entirely arose from the number of minor Theatres, which, swallowing up the theatrical money, left the regular drama with receipts totally inadequate to its support, although assisted with a large sum from Government. Four minor theatres were consequently suppressed. This, my lord, occurred in a country where the people are much more theatrically inclined than they are here. Your memorialists trust that your lordship will avert the same calamity which now threatens them, and which must infallibly happen to regular theatres, unless your lordship exerts your power to suppress these two minor theatres, which have thus so scandalously abused their licences.

It may be thought a hard case that these theatres

should be suppressed after their proprietors have laid out money in enlarging them. The great increase in their size since the Olympic and Sans Pareil Theatres were first licensed is one of the chief points complained of; as your memorialists suffer in the exact ratio to that increase. But, my lord, have they not justly forfeited their licences by the entire change of the line of performances from those expressed in the terms of their licence? And would it not be a much harder case if your memorialists, with all the numerous and respectable persons, so deeply involved in the interests of their great national concerns, if they were to suffer the certain ruin, which the continuance of these theatres must bring upon them. Would it not be a much harder case, my lord, if your memorialists, who, on the sacred faith of their patent rights, have expended a larger sum than ever was before embarked by individuals in this or any other country, in the support of the national drama, if they were to form the only exception upon record in this country where those rights are trampled upon and destroyed, without the smallest plea, not even of the offer of a compensation?

Your memorialists confidently trust that they shall not be made such unmerited victims; but that your lordship will give your most serious attention, as the guardian of the national drama, to the points pressed upon your lordship's consideration; and from your lordship's high sense of justice, they are convinced that another season they shall not have to endure

such severe and unmerited losses, as the performances at the Olympic and Sans Pareil Theatres have so long occasioned to the Patent Theatres of Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Should, however, your Lordship feel averse to pronounce judgment upon these points, perhaps your lordship might be pleased to adopt a similar course to that lately adopted in the case of the Lyceum Theatre: namely, that the infringements and burletta questions should be by your lordship referred to the secretary of state, or law officers of the crown, to whose decision your memorialists pledge themselves implicitly and respectfully to submit.

Your memorialists beg leave to subscribe themselves,

My Lord,

Your lordship's most obedient servants,
[Signed on the part of the Committee of Drury
Lane Theatre,]

ESSEX,	PASCOE GRENFELL,
YARMOUTH,	THOMAS H. FARQUHAR
P. DOUGLAS,	EDWARD CODRINGTON,
P. MOORE, Trustee,	DOUGLAS KINNAIRD,
R. WALPOLE,	THOMAS TURTON,
RICHARD WILSON,	W. LINLEY,
EDWARD ELLICE,	DAVID RICARDO,
J. DENT,	G. LAMB.

ROBERT ALB. COX.

[On the part of the Proprietors of Covent Garden
Theatre,]

T. HARRIS.

COPY OF NOTE ATTACHED TO THE MEMORIAL.

THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE will with pleasure sign the memorial, concerning which Mr. Ward has written to him, on his return to London; but he is unable to say exactly when that will be;—he thinks early in April.

Holker, 14th March, 1818.

LETTER FROM MR. ELLISTON TO THE LORD
CHAMBERLAIN.

Stratford Place, 12th April, 1818.

MY LORD,—On my arrival in London, yesterday, I found a letter addressed to me, under your lordship's direction, by John Calvert, Esq., on the 8th instant, accompanied by a copy of a memorial to your lordship, from the committee of Drury Lane Theatre, and the proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre, and desiring that I would furnish, in writing, such reply to the contents of the said memorial, as I might think proper to make for your lordship's information.

The professed object of the memorial, so addressed to your lordship, is, to complain of a pretended infringement and abuse of the licences granted to the proprietors of the Olympic and Sans Pareil Theatres. It will, of course, however, be obvious to your lordship, that the real object of such memorial, is, not merely to complain of what

the memorialists assume to be misconduct in the proprietors of the Olympic and Sans Pareil Theatres; but, also, to complain, in an equal, if not a much stronger degree, of what those gentlemen are pleased to assume to have been the "*strange*" misconduct of your lordship's predecessor, in having granted such licences at all; and to have been, for some years, and to be now, the "*strange*" misconduct of your lordship, in continuing the licences so granted by your predecessor, after their long enjoyment by the persons to whom they were granted, and by the successor of one of those persons; and after the investment of very large sums of money, on the part of all those persons, on the faith of the validity of the licences held, and of their uninterrupted renewal, yearly, under the usual conditions.

That your lordship's predecessor possessed the most perfect authority for the grants which were thus made by him, and that your lordship has also possessed, and at this moment possesses, the most perfect authority, for the continuance of those acts, are facts so indisputable, that I should hold it a departure from the respect due to the important office your lordship fills, if I were to enter into any elaborate defence, either of your lordship, or of your lordship's predecessor, from the charge thus wantonly and arrogantly thrown on the proceedings of both. But although neither the official measures of your lordship, nor of your lordship's predecessor,

can require a justification at my hands, it is impossible to refrain from remarking, that, as far as the statements contained in the memorial presented to your lordship extend, there appears to be, not only a presumptuous disposition to question the propriety of the acts of your lordship, and of your lordship's predecessor, but a total want of explicitness, as to the grounds on which those acts are authorized.

The memorialists, after declaring that they "would be very sorry to question the power of the lord chamberlain's licence," (a feeling, the sincerity of which they immediately evince by questioning it in the most unlimited degree,) state, that "they are well aware" that this power "emanates from a branch of the royal prerogative which is exercised by the royal will, or by the authority of the lord chamberlain." Now, my lord, without attempting the hopeless task of affixing any distinct sense to the words so used by the memorialists, it will be clear to your lordship, and to every officer on your lordship's establishment, that there is either no knowledge, on the part of the memorialists, of the provisions of the statute of the 10th of George II. cap. 28; or, if there be such knowledge, that there is a most unworthy disposition to avoid the use of that knowledge, by the attempt to refer the authority under which your lordship, in such cases, acts, to some loose and undefined principle; when there are ready means to shew that the licences granted by your lordship are upheld by an act of

the legislature; the terms of which can admit, only, of one fair and reasonable interpretation.

In the first clause of the act to which I have referred, certain penalties levied on stage-performers are declared to apply, unless the performances spoken of, be sanctioned by letters patent from the King; or by "licence from the lord chamberlain;" and, in the fifth clause of the act, the extent to which licences shall be granted for such performances by the lord chamberlain, is expressly limited to the city of Westminster, and its liberties; and to places in which the sovereign be actually resident.

The power of the lord chamberlain to grant licences for theatrical entertainments, of all descriptions, within the district in which the Olympic and Sans Pareil Theatres stand, has thus, so long ago as in the year 1737, been distinctly enacted, or, which is the same thing, distinctly recognised. I am not unaware, however, that there have been persons, who have been fanciful or sordid enough to imagine, that they could torture the provisions of the act, which I have quoted, from their clear and inevitable meaning. As regards this, I am thoroughly satisfied, and so, I am convinced, will your lordship, and your lordship's legal advisers, be, that any attempt which might be made to counteract the palpable intention of the law in question, would infallibly fail; and that the powers exercised by your lordship's predecessors, by your lordship, and

the most determined manner, the utmost efforts that malignity, self-interest, a thirst for monopoly, or any other still less amiable motive, may engender, for the extinction, by legal means, of the valid title which I am certain I hold, under the sanction and authority of the licence granted by your lordship.

I am, of course, fully sensible that the licence I possess, in common with all the other licences granted by your lordship, is capable of being withdrawn, whenever such may be your lordship's pleasure. But without, in the slightest degree, questioning the right of your lordship to enforce this exercise of your authority, it would be an affront to your lordship's sense of justice to suppose that there could be a chance of the occurrence of any such exercise of authority, merely because persons who have an interest in prohibiting me, if they can, from carrying on the trade in which your lordship has thought it right to allow me to establish myself, have had the face to address a solicitation to your lordship, so to exercise your power. It being clearly, as I have shewn, within the legal province of the lord chamberlain to decide on the fitness of granting licences, for all descriptions of theatrical entertainments, within the city and liberties of Westminster, I am entitled to affirm, that the licences granted to the Olympic and Sans Pareil Theatres, are not only as competent, in

point of law, but that they are, as far as they extend, as essential in point of public expediency, as the authorities held by the Theatres Royal in Drury Lane and Covent Garden. To suppose otherwise would be to insult the judgment exercised as to the original motives for granting the licences.

Standing, therefore, on an equally valid footing, in point of right and utility, as far as the privileges of the licences extend, with the proprietors of the Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres, it is not the dimensions of those theatres, as compared with the dimensions of the Olympic and Sans Pareil Theatres, which can at all justify the superior pretensions to protection, which the memorialists so superciliously affect to urge. The small dealer, my lord, is as well entitled to assistance and favour, as the wholesale speculator. In many instances, he is far better entitled to support; and I am convinced that, in the view of all dispassionate persons, it would not have been more unbecoming in me to have solicited your lordship to have interdicted the trade of Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres, (as it would be fully in your lordship's power to do, if you saw occasion), than it has been in the parties concerned in the conduct of those theatres, to solicit your lordship, for the purpose of augmenting their profits, to suppress my trade; and to consign to destruction the concern, in which the licence granted by your

lordship's predecessor, and continued in the just and liberal exercise of your lordship's discretion, has led me to embark a very valuable portion of my property.

Now, my lord, the answers to these several pretences are easy and distinct. They will be such, I trust and believe, as will perfectly satisfy your lordship that no blame can attach, excepting to those who have ventured to abuse your lordship's time and patience, by such monstrous incongruities, by such puerile frivolities, and by such gross, and, to use their own selection of epithets, by such "daring" and "scandalous" misrepresentations.

As the answers, however, which are necessary, will lead me into some length, and as I have professional engagements in the country to fulfil, which require my almost immediate departure from London, I request that your lordship will have the goodness to excuse my entering further into the subject for a few days. In the meantime, I, at once, take the liberty of transmitting to your lordship what I have thus far written. By doing this, I hope your lordship will perceive that I have not lost one moment in paying attention to your lordship's commands, as far as my time and opportunities have permitted : that it is my most earnest wish to convince your lordship that I have a perfect sense of the value of the privileges I enjoy, and of the abundant sufficiency of the authority from which

those privileges are derived ; and that I feel myself quite in a condition to shew that those privileges have been used fairly and honestly ; and, at least, as consistently, and creditably, as the privileges possessed by the parties who are so anxious to libel my conduct, and to underrate the competency of your lordship's powers, and the soundness of the judgment with which those powers have been administered.

I remain, with profound respect, my lord,
 Your lordship's most obliged and
 most obedient humble servant,
 ROBERT WILLIAM ELLISTON.

To the most noble
 the Marquis of Hertford,
 &c. &c. &c.

Elliston soon afterwards resumed operations for his last season at Birmingham. In his formation of an entire new company, many curious letters and applications were forwarded to him by country actors and other ambitious spirits. We give example in the following ; the first is a melancholy statement :

"SIR,—I take the liberty to apply to you in a day of calamity for a situation, however *servile*, at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham.

"I am, at the present time, completely broken down by a complication of misfortunes not the result

of misconduct ; and, in consequence of being for some weeks unable to exert myself, I have endured often hunger, thirst, the inclemency of elements, and every deprivation human nature can experience.

“ I am the authoress of various publications. I have had a concern in a theatre some time since, and supported myself last year by the delivery of a lecture, (composed by myself,) the basis of which is natural philosophy.

“ I can have no objection to make myself generally useful, for a small salary. I have lately sold my apparel through insufficiency of sustenance. When I have in some measure recruited my wardrobe, I would have no objection to appear occasionally on the stage for no additional remuneration. My memory is unimpaired. I could undertake to write for you expeditiously, or arrange accounts. I could attend at a door, distribute bills, contract for cleaning the theatre, and make myself useful in any way reasonably required. I am without money, in great distress—the only relative of a respectable family, by whom I was reared in the sunshine of affluence.

“ I am enveloped in flannel from a recent accident, and have no clothing that fits me ; but shall soon, I hope, recover appearances. I have by me many songs and other compositions for the stage I have never yet published. I can curtail pieces for the stage ; but that is a department, I trust, you attend to.

"Should you be willing to engage me, favour me with a line, Mrs. Wood, Post-office, Coventry, as I must depart to-morrow, if not employed. As to salary I would only wish for what will enable me to procure *subsistence*.

"Yours, &c.

"SUSAN WOOD,

"Authoress of 'Literary Exercises,'
and various Works.

"— Elliston, Esq."

A second :

"SIR,—If you have a vacancy for a lady at the Birmingham Theatre for the heavy or motherly-speaking persons, I should be glad. I have played the whole of Mrs. Powell's line in the theatres royal, Cork, Weymouth, Belfast, &c. ; can make myself useful ; am well-known to Mr. Bell, proprietor of the Weekly Messenger, and your most humble servant.

"M. EDWARDS.

"2, Herbert's Passage, Strand."

"N.B.—My figure is not quite so good for tragedy as I could wish ; but my friends say I am worth my weight in gold in comedy."

A third appears :

"Circumstances have driven me on the stage ; I am resolved to make the effort—I say effort, be-

cause when we meet you will see I am totally inexperienced in the art ; but I have youth, beauty, talents, and an engaging manner. I am driven, sir, on the stage—parental tyranny has done this ; and the only revenge I shall now take is to live by the exercise of those faculties and advantages by which God has blessed me. I only know of you by report—all the world knows Mr. Elliston. I do not intend to write a long letter—of what use would it be ? You see my intentions, and, as to my merits, they must speak for themselves. I would rather surprise you by shewing you what they are, than disappoint you by talking much about them.

“ My name is Sullivan—I am unmarried ; but you must address to me ‘ Mrs., ’ as I am at present living with a gentleman, and we think it would be more respectable ; but I shall be ‘ Miss ’ in the bills.

“ Direct to me at Mr. Brown’s, shoemaker, St. Albans.”

A fourth :

“ SIR,—I have Taken the liberty of adressing you a Few lines to know if you woud take A young man into y^r Company who can do amost any thing which lays in my power. I can sing a Good Commic song, and dance a Good hornpipe, and do all the rusticks. I have sing at the “ King’s Head ”

for two years, and Mr. Saunders knows me well. He can do any thing which lays in my power. Please to write quick, and direct for Mr. Steads, Swines Markit, Leicester. I am,

“ W. STEADS.”

“ Mr. Barker begs to announce to Mr. Elliston, that the termination of a recent engagement in the west of England has afforded him some leisure, and that he is open to an offer for the Birmingham Theatre. Mr. Barker plays the leading parts of the drama generally. He would prefer opening in *Don Felix*, but will not make it a *sine quâ non*. Mr. Barker will expect those comforts which are extended to the first London performers, and that due consideration will be made in respect of terms, as Mr. Barker's wardrobe is unique.”

19, South Street, Bristol.

September 14th.

“ SIR,—I take the liberty of writing respecting my daughter Charlotte, who I think will suit you.

“ She has danced on the Bath and Bristol Theatres for some time; she now can take parts—*Juliana*, in ‘The Honeymoon;’ *Miss Blandford*, in ‘Speed the Plough;’ *Emily Tempest*, in the ‘Wheel of Fortune,’ and many others; also *Columbine* and other parts in pantomime; in respecting dancing she is complete mistress of, and can sing a little.

“ My good friend, the late Mr. Williams, taught her to speke for near two years ; and as she wishes to com out in the country, I think she would be generally useful to you ; but of course you would wish to see her perform, which she shall do for three nights for your paying her expenses up, and if you aprove of her we then can talk of her salery. Your answer, by return, will oblige, sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ E. JONES, Music-mistress.

“ P. S.—Direct for me at Mr. Barratt’s, Book-seller, Old Bond Street, Bath.”

The theatrical world is a distinct genus—full of contradictions and strange anomalies. Within a few weeks of the contentious heat between the greater and lesser stage dynasties, we find Elliston actually engaged at Drury Lane Theatre, where he performed for ten nights, in consequence of the weakening attractions of Kean. The engagement, however, neither answered the purpose of the committee nor the comedian, the receipts averaging only 120*l.* nightly, and Elliston’s payment being a share after 225*l.*; so that the sum of Robert William’s profits was something like the contents of *Parson Adams’s* pocket—viz. £0 0*s.* 0*d.*

In August, Elliston opened his Northampton Theatre, and played with considerable success.

But the joint efforts of Kean and Elliston were unable to sustain the tottering fortunes of Drury Lane ; and in May of this year (1818), the company were called together to meet the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Essex, Lord Yarmouth, Peter Moore, and others of the committee. Moore opened the business of the day in a careful speech, the substance of which was, that no substance was any longer to be found under the roof of Drury, and to prevent a crash, it was proposed that each performer, whose salary exceeded 4*l.* per week, should take a reduction, by a graduated per centage.

A scheme like this, at the period of which we are speaking, was a new and startling proposition. The performers were amazed—each stared in his neighbour's face—became mutinous, as the Israelites in the very hour of deliverance. Lord Yarmouth then told them that unless the proposal was acceded to, the theatre must close.

“ Then let it close ! ” cried Dowton, from the crowd—“ my voice is but one amongst many, but I will never consent to abandon a single farthing. I am myself the proprietor of many theatres, by some of which I lose 40*l.* a week, but I should blush to call my performers together on such a question as the present. I will never consent to this.”

A modification of the resolution was then offered, but Dowton still persisted. “ No, no, no,” re-

peated he—“ we will have no compromise—we will have our bond. If you are in want of money, I will advance you a draft for 500*l.*, on security, and you can then keep afloat a little ;” but this proposition was, of course, rejected.

The season still lingered on for thirty additional nights, Kean playing to 87*l.* receipts.

In the course of this summer, the interior of the Olympic was rebuilt, at an outlay of 2500*l.* Elliston now acted here himself, and having collected a good company, the theatre became a place of fashionable resort. This season, which produced a profit of 500*l.* over and above the expense incurred by the building, commenced by a new burletta, entitled “ Rochester,” and “ Giovanni in London ;” two of the most popular pieces of minor theatrical record.

A few evenings previous to the opening, as Elliston was mounting a staircase in his theatre, he was seized by a severe fit, but by timely assistance was soon restored to his accustomed energies. The newspapers having announced this attack as apoplexy, and that the manager still continued in a dangerous state, Elliston addresses a letter to the “ Courier,” which, being so highly characteristic, we cannot forbear inserting .

“ Sir,—Although I should be reluctant to make unnecessary stir respecting my temporary illness,

you will, I trust, excuse my desire to quiet any public alarm which might arise from the perusal of the paragraphs of yesterday evening. My attack was not of an apoplectic description, but mere exhaustion, arising from the unremitting attention I have been compelled to give in the reconstruction of my theatre, which I pledge myself shall open on Monday next, the 16th, with *unrivalled attractions*.

“ Yours and the public’s,

“ R. W. ELLISTON.”

At the close of this season, Elliston presented his wife with a service of plate, for which he paid 400*l.*, a gift far more consistent with his sense of obligation to that excellent woman, than his notions of common prudence, and perhaps the most useless appendage which could have been offered, at this moment, to the Ellistonian *menage*. In some degree, it resembles Mr. Pea-green Haynes’ presentation, to a lady, of an elegant “*vis-à-vis*,” who had not even a coal-shed to protect the vehicle, which stood, until sold, in a back yard to her lodgings.

The period had now arrived for Elliston’s resigning the Birmingham Theatre into the hands of his landlord; but this, it appears, he resolutely refused to do. The proprietors having declined taking some of Elliston’s scenery at his own valuation, he became highly incensed, and, by an odd kind of

revenge, refused to give up the keys of the theatre ; putting the law thereby completely into the hands of the other party, and rendering himself liable to double rent. Still he fancied this line of conduct an evidence of dignified ire, and though prevailed on at last to restore possession, nothing could induce him to leave his scenery behind him on other terms than he had stated. The result was, his determination to remove it to another theatrical tenement, and this the Leamington ; which toy-playhouse could have lain *perdue* behind one of the " flats " he was about carrying away.

A day was appointed for the removal, and at considerable trouble the flapping frameworks of castles and cut-woods, drawbridges and dungeons, were elevated into an open van to travel many miles across country. All went on tolerably well for a time—slowly and surely ; but it was " a raw and gusty day," and the canvass being set top gallant high in the wind, threatened the safety of the vessel. Nor were these fears without foundation ; for scarcely had the van proceeded two miles beyond a certain village, than a sudden squall took right aback the toppling pile, and fairly swept it from the vehicle into a neighbouring field. The whole stock appeared so comfortably bedded, that the driver made no effort to load his cart a second time, but drove quietly back to Birmingham to acquaint his master.

But the excitement of the affair itself being

passed away, Elliston absolutely took no further notice of the matter; and almost three weeks after the occurrence, a boon acquaintance of his own was travelling the road, and beheld the identical ruins peeping from the sedgy glebe. Elliston, in fact, never removed a stick, till, at last, "Lord Osmond's Castle" being knocked to pieces for firewood, was literally brought to the hammer, and "Blue Beard's tower" quite as literally reduced to ashes.

It was during Elliston's last season at Birmingham that he met Mr. Howard Payne, the "American Roscius," with whom formerly he had had some intimacy. Elliston at this time, greatly pressed by a variety of undertakings, was advertised for playing the part of *Richard III.* on a certain ensuing Wednesday, and was, in fact, on his way to the rehearsal, when he encountered his friend Howard Payne. After a hasty salutation and some professional inquiries, Elliston suddenly observed to his companion—

"My dear Payne, I well know your readiness in conferring favours, and, in the present instance, you are the only man in this town who could oblige me."

"Ay!—what is it?" demanded the other.

"I am on my way to the theatre: we have a rehearsal—*Richard III.* A rehearsal must be had for the sake of my company, who are a little wild in the play. You know not, my dear fellow, the

whirl in which I am at this moment—country theatres in a state of insurrection, and no solid loyalty at home. Look at these letters—must be replied to by to-day's post. Payne, oblige me—run to the theatre—go through the rehearsal with my people—you know the business—better, no man in the two hemispheres—set them right—put them to their work, and relieve me from this morning's annoyance.”

“ Why, 'tis so long since I played the part, that really ——”

“ No man living could have presented himself more capable of serving me than you. The business—you know it as well as I do—come, my good fellow, run over the words as quickly as you like—only put 'em right for Wednesday night. Show them how they flog us at New York,” added he, with one of his slyest twinkles.

After a little further expostulation, on the one hand, and amicable contention on the other, Howard Payne consented, and away they went, arm in arm, to the theatre.

On entering the stage, Elliston introduced his friend to the principals in attendance, and bidding the prompter immediately call the rehearsal, once again whispered “ New York” into Howard's ear, and vanished.

Elliston's plea of business might really have been a fair one, but the machinery of his mind was of

that complex nature, that no common observer could hope to understand the manufacture which was going on within. The manager now took the opportunity of gliding into the front of the theatre, where, placing himself in an obscure corner, he noticed all that was in progress on the stage. Having witnessed the very able manner in which his friend was conducting the rehearsal in one or two scenes, Elliston left the house with extreme precipitation, and, making the best of his way to his printers', set the operators there immediately to work on striking off two or three hundred bills, of an extraordinary size, announcing "The arrival of the Celebrated American Roscius, Mr. Howard Payne, who would have the honour of appearing, on the following evening, in the part of *Richard III.*"

These bills were printed, and nearly posted, in various parts of the town before the termination of the said rehearsal; and when, at about three o'clock, the actors were retiring from their morning's task, and with them, of course, Howard Payne himself, their eyes were saluted, at the corner of almost every street, with the "American Roscius for the following evening!" Payne, naturally enough, was thunderstruck—he then became furious; refusing, of course, to play a part into which he had been so thoroughly entrapped, and went directly in search of the tricking manager. Arriving at Elliston's lodgings, he there learnt that unexpected business

had called the manager suddenly away to Leicester, but that he should certainly be in Birmingham again on Wednesday night.

Furious and bewildered, poor Payne now retraced his way to the theatre, where, at every step, "The American Roscius," in *Niagara* type, assailed his gaze. The actors now gathered about him—Elliston was, to all intents and purposes, gone, and should Payne still refuse to act, the theatre, on the following night, would be closed, and all parties lose a night's salary. Payne who had but lately arrived in England, with the determination of following his profession; knew that he had the public to conciliate; and it was now forcibly represented to him that, should he fail to perform, the Birmingham people would, naturally enough, suspect Payne of some breach of contract with Elliston, and thus look coldly on him for the future.

The whole company therefore, with one common effort, entreated him to play the part, pleading their necessities, and professing their gratitude. Their prayers and other considerations finally prevailed. Payne consented—the morrow arrived—"the American Roscius" was flattered by crowded boxes and pit—the actor was highly applauded—the receipts great—and Elliston, true to the Wednesday, returned to Birmingham, when all grievances were forgotten in the triumphant result of *Richard III.*

Colman was now solicited by the committee of

Drury Lane Theatre to undertake the management of that establishment. Increasing debt, decreasing receipts, *blasés* actors, and actresses far more engaging than worthy engagement, brought at length this band of Sybarites to their senses, (if we may venture so much,) by inducing them to apply to our friend George for relief. Colman, however, declined interference. To the vacant sceptre Stephen Kemble was then nominated, for the chair being positively too narrow for his "Le Gros" majesty, orders were given for the construction of a new one. This, alas, was one of the most unfortunate reigns in the dynasty of Drury. Stephen's undertakings were to bring out a new piece every fortnight—good, bad, or indifferent; and having so liberal a choice of quality, he fancied he might at least succeed in the alternative himself; and so he did. Stephen Kemble wrote a piece; but under which of the three denominations it fell, we will not pause to determine. Disastrous, in fine, was the fortune of the theatre, and the doors closed full six weeks earlier than usual, from utter inability to proceed.

Disgusted with the whole affair, or willing to extricate himself as far as possible from the obloquy daily accruing to the committee, Lord Byron now made a public statement of the proceedings at Drury Lane, during the time of his co-operation in the management, of which we give a copy:

LORD BYRON'S STATEMENT OF THEATRICAL MATTERS
AT DRURY LANE THEATRE.

"When I belonged to the Drury-lane Committee, and was one of the Stage Committee of Management, the number of plays upon the shelves was about five hundred. Conceiving that amongst these there must be *some* of merit, in person and by proxy, I caused an investigation. I do not think that of those which I saw, there was one which could be conscientiously tolerated.

Maturin was very kindly recommended to me by Walter Scott, to whom I had recourse—*firstly*, in the hope that he would do something for us himself; and secondly, in my despair, that he would point out to us any young or old writer of promise. Maturin sent his *Bertram*, and a letter *without* his address; so that at first I *could not* turn him no answer. When I at last *hit upon* his residence, I sent him a favourable answer, and *some* thing more substantial. His play *impressed* us. I was at that time absent from England. I *read* Coleridge, too, but he had *nothing* *frankly* in hand at the time. Mr. Sotheby *obligingly* *showed* all his tragedies; I pledged myself, and, *notwithstanding* many squabbles with my *contemporary* brethren, did get *Iran* accepted, *read*, and *the* *play* distributed. But, lo! in the *very* *case* of the matter, upon some *tepidness* *on the part of* *the* *man*

or warmth on that of the author, Sotheby withdrew his play. Sir J. B. Burgess also presented four tragedies and a farce, which I handed to the Green-room and Stage Committee; but they would not do. Then the scenes I had to go through! The authors and authoresses—the milliners and the wild Irishmen—the people from Brighton, from Blackwall, from Chatham, from Cheltenham, from Dublin, from Dundee,—who came in upon me!—to all whom it was proper to give a civil answer, and a hearing, and, ah me! sometimes a reading.

Mrs. Glover's father, an Irish dancing-master, of sixty years, called upon me to request to play "Archer," dressed in silk stockings, on a frosty morning, to show his legs, (which were certainly good for his age; and very Irish.) Miss Emma Somebody, with a play, entitled the *Bandit of Bohemia*, or some such title; Mr. O'Higgins—resident at Richmond—with an Irish tragedy, in which the Protagonist was chained by the leg to a pillar during the chief part of the performance. He was a wild man, of savage appearances, and the difficulty of not laughing at him was only to be got over by reflecting on the probable consequences with such a ruffian.

As I am really a civil and polite person, and do hate giving pain when it can be avoided, I sent these applicants up to Douglas Kinnaird, who is a man of business, and sufficiently ready with a nega-

tive, and left them to settle with him ; and as at the beginning of next year I went abroad, I have since been little aware of the progress of the theatre.

Players are said to be impracticable people. They are so ; but I managed to steer clear of any disputes with them, and excepting one debate with the elder Byrne about Miss Smith's *pas de*—something (I forget the technicals), I do not remember any litigation of my own. I used to protect Miss Smith, because she was like Lady Jane Harley in the face ; and likenesses go a great way with me indeed. In general, I left such things to my more bustling colleagues, who used to reprove me seriously for not being able to take such things in hand, without buffooning with the histrionions, and throwing things into confusion by treating light matters with levity. Then the committee—then the sub-committee—we were but few, and never agreed. There was Peter Moore, who contradicted Kinnaird ; and Kinnaird, who contradicted every body.

There were two managers, Rae and Dibdin, and our secretary, Ward—and yet we were all very zealous, and in earnest to do good, and so forth. Hobhouse furnished us with prologues to our revived old English plays, but was not pleased with us for complimenting him as the “ Upton ” of our theatre (Mr. Upton is, or was, the poet who writes the songs for Astley's), and almost gave up prologuizing in consequence.—Farewell.”

In June, 1819, it was agreed unanimously that the theatre should be let, and advertisements appeared to that effect. The lease to be granted for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years, in which nineteen clauses were involved. The rent was regularly to be paid two months in advance; the property on the premises to be taken at a valuation, and re-valued at the termination of the holding.

Kean was the first adventurer in the field. From Harwich, he thus addresses the secretary :—

“ Put down my name for 100*l.* in the Drury Lane Theatre subscription list.* I have received the conditions of the sub-committee, which nothing but madness could have dictated, or folly induce a man to read a second time. These are my proposals—*verbum sat*—I offer 8000*l.* per annum, for the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane, and its appurtenances, scenery, dresses, chandeliers, books, &c. &c. In a word, I shut my doors against all committees, expecting an immediate surrender of their keys and all privileges in possession. I select my own officers, my own performers, ‘ my reason’s in my will ;’ and can only be accountable to the proprietors for payment of the rent, and to the public for their amusements.

“ This is my offer—if they like it, so ! if not, farewell. Read this aloud to the proprietors, and as much in earnest as I write it. E. KEAN.”

* This subscription was for liquidating the debts incurred by the committee.

This was presently followed up by another communication from the same, dated Leeds.

“SIR,—It was a saying of Aristippus that it is a foolish thing to eat more than we can digest, the truth of which I am now proving ; for really the printed articles of agreement between the lessee and proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre, appear to be so indigestible, that the more I read, the more I am constipated. They present a chaos from which my shallow brain—*talpæ cæcior*, perhaps—can extract nothing. I am a plain, but, I trust, an honest man, and totally unacquainted with the quirks and quilllets of legal chicanery. To re-open Drury Lane, under an experiment so obligatory, would only plunge it into deeper involvements and more utter contempt.

The public has witnessed the mismanagement that has brought this magnificent theatre to ruin ; its restoration can only be achieved by a popular professional man ! and for the sake of my brothers and sisters of the art, I now stand forward to devote my property, reputation, and experience, to this great cause—to cleanse the Augean stable, and ‘raise a new Palmyra.’

I cross the Atlantic, should the proprietors reject my proposals, which are these—rent and taxes 10,000*l.* a-year. The committee may pay my watchmen and firemen (persons on whom they place so deep a trust) if they please ; but no servant, except my own, shall have ingress on my property. I

shall propose such securities as the committee cannot think objectionable. Now, sir, everything else I reject *in toto*. Read this to the committee with emphasis and discretion. I have seen and know their errors—the world has seen and knows them too. *Ex vitio alterius, sapiens emendat suum*. Let me hear from you immediately, that in the one case I may be making my arrangements for the restoration of Drury's monarchy, or be preparing for crossing the Atlantic.

E. KĒAN."

Mr. Thomas Dibdin and Mr. Arnold (which latter gentleman sent in two distinct offers) were also competitors for the lesseeship, and, amongst various others, Robert William Elliston.

Not an hour had elapsed since the publication of the notice for letting, when Elliston made a visit to his friend Winston, a joyous anxiety beaming in his eye ; but with a determination, which advice could only hope wisely to direct, for opposition was clearly quite out of the question. " Drury Lane Theatre is mine !" cried he ; " for it is enough for me that it is to be had—the theatre is mine." Elliston now sat down with his confederate, and, although with a resolution that no sacrifice should be deemed too great for becoming the lessee, yet he drew up a code of management which, for clearness, foresight, equity, and spirit, might have been considered a model of theatrical jurisprudence ; and which, had he himself

carried out with decent observance, would have upheld for many years longer the glories of the drama, and rendered his individual memory a more honourable example than it may be our part to transmit it.

Elliston now sent in his proposals—viz., to take the theatre for fourteen years—to expend 7000*l.* on the building during the time—to pay 8000*l.* rent for the first year, 9000*l.* for the second and third, and 10,000*l.* for the remainder of his term. He also offered a per-centage on all nightly receipts above a certain sum. For security he proposed certain freehold, copyhold, and leasehold estates, in and about London, which had cost him 25,000*l.*, then unencumbered; and to satisfy the proprietors, as to his zeal and undivided interest in the fortunes of Drury, he declared that from the ensuing September, he should have no other theatrical concern upon his hands, and that the Olympic Theatre had already numerous bidders for possession.

This proposal the committee took into serious consideration, but, on the per-centage clause, deemed it advisable to have legal opinion; and Serjeant Lens pronouncing such arrangement to constitute a partnership, this point was abandoned.

Whilst the question was pending, he addresses Mrs. Coutts, to the effect that, in all probability, he will be the new lessec, and concludes by these words :—

“ I may, madam, be asked for a further guarantee ; in that case, dare I flatter myself Mr. Coutts would be my friend ? I hesitate as I ask the question, and my pen falls from my hand whilst it traces
R. W. ELLISTON.”

To this application the lessee elect received a reply from Mr. Coutts himself : “ That it was impossible for him to comply, having refused on every similar occasion — that it was an obligation to which no banker should render himself answerable ; but that his favour and patronage should not be wanting to the interests of Drury or the encouragement of the new tenant.

On the 7th of August, Elliston was declared the accepted candidate, and on that very day he forwarded a check for 2000*l.*, the amount stipulated to be paid in advance of rent ; which sum was a loan from his uncle Martyn, of whom we have so long lost sight, but rejoice again to meet on so generous an occasion.

The agreement for the theatre (for no lease was ever executed) was made out in the names of Peter Moore, Patrick Douglas, Richard Wilson, Benjamin Oakley, and George Robins, five proprietors appointed for the purpose. The term was for fourteen years, determinable by the death of the lessee, who was subject to a nightly free admission for 653 persons, at a yearly rent of 10,200*l.*—50*l.* to be

taken nightly, and 18*l.* 15*s.* for every occasion the theatre should be open beyond two hundred in each season—the lessee to lay out 1000*l.* previous to his first entertainment, in decorating the interior ; and before the commencement of his second season (1820) to contract and decorate the theatre, laying out not less than 6000*l.* ; to pay land-tax, sewers-rate, and all other rates, &c. &c. ; the lessee not to engage, professionally, in any other theatre in London ; and, in the event of his being declared bankrupt, or taking the benefit of the insolvent act, the committee to have the power of re-entry, &c. &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

The "Great Lessee!"—Elliston's pleasantries—Behind the counter—Mr. Beazley—Correspondence with Kean—Mrs. Kean—A singular application—Mrs. Siddons' letter—Sir Walter Scott's letter—Mr. Howard Payne—Mr. John Nicol—Sir William Scott's letter—Mr. Maturin—His letters—Miss Jane Porter's letter—Miss Kelly—An entertainment in the Saloon—Elliston opens Drury Lane Theatre—The Newspapers—Wewitzer—Peake, Sheridan's treasurer—Mr. Thomas Sheridan—Richard Brinsley Sheridan—Anecdotes—Sheridan's letter—Dowton and the "Big Letters"—Elliston at Doncaster—A practical joke—Kean plays *Lear*—"A strike"—"The sick list"—Virginius.

ELLISTON, now the "Great Lessee," as he was wont to be saluted, immersed in the spring tides of accruing consequences—letters, applications, contracts, appointments, &c. &c.—found yet opportunity for visiting his favourite Leamington, where he had, some time before, opened a circulating library, in the name of his sons, William and Henry; and in the upper apartments of which, Mrs. Elliston occasionally resided, transferring for a time her professional engagements to this rising place of fashionable resort. Here, in his baby theatre (for verily, like St. Lawrence Church, in the Isle of Wight, it was the smallest of its kind in England) the great lessee felt peculiar pleasure in exhibiting himself. Like an emperor visiting the obscurest nook in his

dominions, he pleased his imagination with the prospect of the future, by the strong contrast with the present ; while a consciousness that his coming was looked on as a kind of condescension at this epoch of his fame, flattered his vanity, and suggested opportunities for playing off some of those eccentricities so peculiar to his disposition.

One morning, *en plaisantant*, he descended early into his shop, and looking round with the irresistible humour of *Tangent* himself, " It is my cruel fate," said he, " that my children will be gentlemen." And, on his two sons making their appearance, they beheld their father in an old dapple grey frock-coat, dusting the books, arranging the ink-bottles, repiling the quires of Bath post, and altering the position of the China mandarins, with the veriest gravity in the world. One of the first customers that came in, was a short, dirty-faced drab of a maid-servant, who brought some books to be exchanged ; and nearly at the same moment, a snivelling charity-boy, with a large patch of diachylon across his nose, placed himself at the counter, demanding other articles.

" One at a time," said *Octavian*, with petrifying solemnity. " Now, madam ?" pursued he, turning to the runt.

" Missus' a sent back these here, and wants summut quite new."

" The lady's name ?" demanded Elliston.

" Wyse," grunted the girl.

“With a V or a W?” asked Elliston, as he referred to his list of subscribers; but the wench only grinned; when up mounted *Sir Edward Mortimer* the ladder placed against his shelves, and withdrawing two wretchedly-torn volumes (contents unknown) clapped them together, according to the trade, to liberate the dust, and placing them in the grubby claws of the half-frightened girl—“There,” said he, “a work of surpassing merit, and the leaves uncut I declare! and now, sir, (turning to the boy,) I will attend to you.”

The lad who, by this time, had nearly pulled the plaster from his visage, owing to the nervous state of agitation into which he had been thrown, could not at the precise moment recollect his mission; when again Elliston exclaimed, with the intonation of a “Merlin,” “And now, sir, I will attend to you.”

“Half-a-quire of outsides, and three ha’porth o’ mixed wafers,” screamed the urchin, throwing fourpence-halfpenny on the counter.

“Outsides,” repeated Elliston to his son William; “mixed wafers,” said he, in the same tone, to Henry.

The young men, convulsed with laughter, instantly obeyed. Elliston now demanded the paste-pot. Taking the brush, he first deliberately dabbed the lad’s nose, thereby replacing the fallen diachylon; and, having sent him about his business, commenced fastening the dog’s-eared labels on the

backs of sundry volumes, and knocking in a fresh nail against the wall, to support a huge advertisement of "Macassar Oil." He then seized a watering-pot, and, much to the merriment of a few strangers who were by this time collected about the shop, began sprinkling the steps of his library door. Having played a few further antics, the "Great Lessee" retired to answer his London correspondents on the stupendous affairs of Drury Lane.

Elliston, at this time, acted parts nightly in his pet theatre. It was here that he told his audience, on taking his leave, that he had reason to believe it was the gracious intention of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent to confer on him the honour of knighthood; and when next he should have the pleasure of playing before them, it would be the part of *Sir John Falstaff* by Sir Robert Elliston."

One of Elliston's principal advisers at this time was Mr. Beazley, a gentleman, whose active and intelligent qualities in his profession, as architect, and dramatic writer, have gained him considerable renown. Mr. Beazley's social temperament was also well appreciated by one who was himself of the best company; so that hours of business were by no means the only time they passed together, and no avocation of the day—to which we might add the night also—came amiss to the available qualities of our modern Vanbrugh.

Applications for engagements now poured thickly

on the new lessee; and “ from the four quarters of the world, renowned suitors.” But the first person to whom he himself made advances was Edmund Kean.

Kean, having been himself a bidder for Drury Lane Theatre, was, naturally enough, a little soured by disappointment; and certain old asperities, ‘ *in re Elliston*,’ not being yet fined down, he not only exhibited a disinclination at co-operation with the new manager, but publicly declared he would never act under his authority in any establishment whatever; and, that in respect of Drury Lane, he would rather pay the forfeit of his bond—namely, one thousand pounds—than enter the house under the present lease.

On this, Elliston forwarded to him a lengthy expostulation, begging his reconsideration of the matter, and offering him many concessions, concluding by saying, “ I shall think it no degradation to perform *Cassio* to your *Othello*.”

Kean again writes—but, as with Voltaire, we are frequently puzzled to know whether he is joking or in earnest :

“ SIR,—I congratulate yourself and the public, on your accession to the diadem of Drury Lane, wearied and disgusted, as all sensible people must have been, with the stultified dynasty of the last two seasons. The lovers of the drama will hail with rapture a

minister to their amusements so transcendent in his art, and so mature in experience as Robert William Elliston. With regard to myself I expressed my determination, at the close of the last season, to leave England. My arrangements are made, "*Cras ingens iterabimus æquor*"—I quit the kingdom! This has not been kept a secret. On the contrary, I instructed my agents to promulgate the fact. On my return I may treat with you, but it will not be consonant with my feelings to act in any theatre where I have not the full appropriation of my own talents. But I shall allow the field open to my compeers, and heartily wish success to all aspirants—thus, for the sake of the drama, which should be immortal. I have prepared Mrs. Kean to answer any inquiries that may be necessary, in my absence. *Richards* and *Hamlets* grow on every hedge. Grant you may have a good crop.

"Yours, E. KEAN."

"If I should go by water to the nether world, I shall certainly relate to our great master, you thought it no degradation to act his *Cassio*."

The next communication was from Mrs. Kean :

September 27th, 1819.

"SIR,—A letter arrived from Mr. Kean this morning, addressed to his solicitor, ordering him to tender the 1000*l.* penalty and receive his client's

articles. I take the liberty of saying Mr. Kean's friends have prevailed on him to return to his engagement at Drury Lane. I shall therefore request a few lines from you, saying what time you wish to meet him. His engagements in Scotland do not terminate till the first week in November.

“ Your humble servant, M. KEAN.”

Amongst the numerous applications forwarded to the new manager, was the annexed. It is somewhat of a curiosity—short, but to the point :—

“ SIR,—Honesty is the best policy ; it is also the rarest possession. Do you want an honest man ? In one word, I am he. I am just returned from the Continent, rather unwell, and have a painful swelling in my knee, but quite at your disposal. I will take care of your interests, put me in what trust you will. Honesty will be more valuable to you than ability, for without it the latter becomes more dangerous ; but I am neither wanting in that. I need say no more at present—when we meet, you will know and value me.

“ Yours sincerely, ED. ARGLES.

“ 65, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields,
August, 1819.”

Elliston also addresses himself to Mrs. Siddons :

“ MADAM,—I trust I shall not be deemed intrusive in laying before you a request, which, if ac-

ceded to, will be indeed a public congratulation, and to me an earnest of prosperity. It was on the boards of Drury Lane Theatre, madam, that the splendour of your genius was first displayed and appreciated ; and though I trust Providence has many years of life and happiness in reserve for you, yet of your professional retirement I may perhaps be allowed to speak. Might I petition that your last exertions should also be made on the same ground ? Your wishes, in all particulars, shall be with me peremptory. If I may indulge the hope that we may yet witness a display of those talents, which have placed you so eminently above all professors in the dramatic art, I will have the honour of waiting on you at your own appointment, and in the meantime beg respectfully to subscribe myself

“ Your humble servant, R. W. ELLISTON.”

To this application the manager receives reply :

“ Mrs. Siddons presents her compliments to Mr. Elliston, thanking him for his proposal, and flattering expressions ; but, as Mrs. Siddons never having had the least intention of accepting any engagement again, she was somewhat surprised at receiving Mr. Elliston's letter. In acting for a special benefit, or obeying the commands of the Princess Charlotte, Mrs. Siddons had no thought of returning to the stage professionally, and begs therefore to decline Mr. Elliston's obliging suggestion.”

It will easily be believed that, in Elliston's anxiety, respecting actors, he was no less ambitious in his views of writers. To the first and greatest of his day, Sir Walter Scott, he forwards a request, and with it a liberal pecuniary offer, for a five-act play, leaving the time altogether at the convenience of his distinguished correspondent.

Sir Walter replies in the following manner :—

“DEAR SIR,—I am favoured with your letter, and am much obliged by your opinion of my supposed dramatic talents. But the time is long gone by that I could, or dared, have attempted anything for the stage, and I by no means feel disposed to risk any reputation I have acquired, upon so slippery and uncertain an adventure. It is not so much the power of conceiving dramatic character, and putting its expressions into the language of passion, which ensures success in the present day, as the art of constructing a fable, and interesting the spectators in a series of events, which proceed gradually to a striking conclusion. Now, if I had in my better days any talent of the former description, it is much impaired by a course of bad health ; and of the last and most material requisite to success, I never possessed a shadow ; for I never yet began a poem upon a preconcerted story, and have often been well-advanced in composition before I had any idea how I was to end the work.

I wish you, my dear sir, every success in your new and difficult situation, and have the honour to be,

Very much your faithful servant
Walter Scott

Abbotsford
3 Aug? 1814

John Howard Payne, of whom we have already spoken,—known more particularly in this country as the author of the tragedy, “ Brutus,” in which Kean greatly distinguished himself—made a tender of his services, either as manager, actor, or dramatist; proposals which Elliston deemed expedient to decline. The representation of “ Brutus,” in the preceding year, had caused much newspaper interference; the plot, but more particularly the language, having been liberally, or rather illiberally, taken from a posthumous play of Cumberland, entitled “ The Sybil.”

Previous to its representation, the committee had been apprised that an application would be made to the lord chancellor to restrain its performance, on the grounds above stated. There was also a report that Sir William Scott had complained to his brother, Lord Eldon, that the play contained inflammatory political sentiments, and ought to be

suppressed. The author hereupon sent his drama to Mr. John Nicol, who had been an intimate friend of the late Mr. Cumberland, for his candid opinion. Mr. Nicol makes the following notice :

“ Pall Mall, January 22, 1819.

“ SIR,—I have been favoured with your very polite letter, concerning the use you have made of my late friend, Mr. Cumberland’s, *Sybil*; and I intended to have called upon you, to express, how much I am satisfied with your conduct in fitting parts of it for representation; but being obliged to remain at Windsor, I am afraid it may not be in my power to call upon you so soon as I intended. I therefore trouble you with a line of excuse, and also to congratulate you on the uncommon success of *Brutus*. I hope your remuneration may be equal to your success. I am, sir, with great respect, your very obedient servant,

“ JOHN NICOL.

“ J. H. Payne, Esq.”

Payne then addressed Sir William Scott, who replied :

“ TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE, ESQ.

“ SIR,—I have no right whatever to complain of the mode in which you attempt to do yourself justice, and I shall be truly sorry, if I have unintentionally done you any injustice : it was far from any purpose of mine, in a conversation to which

you allude, the whole of which I most unreservedly submit to you, as far as I can recollect.

“ Living upon terms of the most unguarded familiarity with my brother, I certainly did mention to him, accidentally, what I had heard in several companies, that the play of Brutus did contain passages calculated to produce democratic impressions ; but I added, that I had neither seen nor read the play, and therefore could say nothing about it but what was conveyed to me in common report. I was not at that time talking to the chancellor, in his *official* capacity, or in the way of complaint ; but to my brother, in the idle style of private gossip,—meaning neither to express any opinion of my own, nor that, what I said should go beyond himself and some other person who happened to be in the room. The subject was not started by me, nor pursued by me any further. I think my brother said he had heard similar reports of strong passages in the play : the matter dropped entirely, and I am grieved that any such consequence as you describe, has resulted from it. It never could have occurred to me that such a conversation would have produced it, and for which I cannot consider myself morally answerable.

“ I am, sir, your obedient servant,

“ W^M. SCOTT.

“ Grafton Street, 25th January, 1819.”

Amongst other writers, application was made to Mr. Maturin, the author of “Bertram,” a play

which had been acted with considerable success. He thus replies :—

“ Within this year I have written two tragedies, four thick volumes of tales, a volume of sermons, and kept my engagements with a periodical work, which I hope will exculpate me from indolence;* and convince you that my very limited circumstances compel me to have recourse to so many means of enlarging them. I am *a writer for bread*; the subsistence of a large family depends on my daily exertions; ‘My poverty, and not my will, consents.’

“I am willing and anxious to exert my utmost efforts for the completion of *Osmyn*, which I conceive is not ill suited to Kean’s peculiar and distinguished powers, and beg to know if I may draw upon you for the sum you have so liberally offered for my encouragement. (This was 50*l.*) Mr. Ward has probably mentioned to you my wish, that the play should appear under *his* name, not mine. The author of two unsuccessful plays† must feel a dread of encountering an unfavourable pre-judication, which is avoided by concealing his name till the event is known. With regard to terms, I had 500*l.* for *Bertram*, for forty nights; and Mr.

* Gregorio Leti, the historian, boasted that he had been the author of a book and father of a child for twenty years in uninterrupted succession.

† Fredolpho, and another, unsuccessful at Covent Garden,—both by Maturin.

Murray, of Albemarle-street, gave me three hundred and fifty guineas for the copyright."

"Osmyn," however, was not acted, owing to Kean's objections. Two years after, a further correspondence took place, when Elliston offered Maturin 100*l.* for a melo-drame; to which the latter said—

"I am extremely glad that you agree with me, as to melo-drame being the only species of composition likely to succeed in a modern theatre. It is useless to hope for the success of what is called the regular drama, and though my humble powers be chiefly in that line, I must learn to adapt myself to the taste of the public. I am still so partial to theatrical employment, and so anxious to be engaged as a permanent writer for the stage, and (if I may venture to say so) feel myself so capable of the construction of an effective melo-drame, that I am most willing to undertake it for the present advance of 50*l.*; and I promise, on this condition, to send you over the most powerful and comprehensive melo-drame within the range of my dramatic talent to produce."

In this arrangement Elliston acquiesced. Maturin's next letter says—

"Though I am not very sanguine about my own productions, I have not the least hesitation in saying, my romance will be the most effective mixed drama, since the days of *Blue Beard*, or *Timour the Tartar*. With regard to Mr. Kean, he has conducted himself like what he is—an illiterate, ignorant

fellow ; destitute even of the manners and the very impressions of a gentleman. Putting *me* out of the question, his respect for you should at once have determined him to comply with your wishes, and consult with a writer who did him the honour to sketch a character for him. I cannot but admire his sublime condescension in playing in melo-drame, when his very best acting is in *Sir Edward Mortimer*—in that melo-drame, avowed, ‘The Iron Chest ;’ but what could be expected from a person who rejected *Osmyn*, and plays *Brutus* ? I had the satisfaction of seeing him heartily laughed at in that piece of radical rant, and of hearing him confoundedly hissed in the ‘Roman Actor.’”

The next letter (addressed to Mrs. Elliston) is from the accomplished authoress of “Thaddeus of Warsaw”—Miss Jane Porter :—

“Huntercombe, near Maidenhead,
September 30th, 1819.

“DEAR MADAM,—Not having the pleasure of being personally known to Mr. Elliston, though he favoured me with his elegant pamphlet through you, I venture to make use of the same medium, to learn from him whether I may consider the free-admission to Drury Lane Theatre, presented to me by its sub-committee, as still a privilege under the proprietorship of Mr. Elliston. The invalid state of my health did not allow me to make use of my admission, even once, last season ; and I know not that I may be a more free agent this ;

but still I am reluctant to relinquish, without cause, any mark of honour conferred on me by the gentlemen of the committee, the perpetuity of which Mr. Elliston might not consider an encroachment on his interests. I shall be obliged, dear madam, by your communicating to me his answer on the subject. A line or two, at the close of his advertisement, caused me to ask the question. I there read his list of performers, with a satisfaction, which all real friends of the drama must feel. Indeed, in being friends of the drama, persons of just taste are no less friends of national good order, and general private virtue.

“The drama deserts her high station, on which she was erected by Æschylus of the Greeks and our own Shakspeare, when she considers herself a mere deviser of ‘blameless amusement.’ Mr. Garrick had juster notions on this subject than Dr. Johnson; and it is a matter of surprise how that great master in morals here saw so defectively. What school for loyalty, patriotism, and every noble lesson of public and private conduct, is so profound, so eloquent, as the page of Shakspeare? What Englishman can listen to the speeches of heroic patriotism in his historical plays, and not rise from his seat a better subject, and a happier man? glorying in his country, and feeling his own consequence as one of its sons? Some of the speeches in Henry V.—‘Give a very echo to the seat where Britain’s weal is throned!’

These are the lessons which I anticipate Mr. Elliston teaching, from the boards of that Drury, which Garrick so long made the auxiliary of the classic page and Christian pulpit. With my best wishes for his prosperity, and that of the theatre—believe me, dear madam, very sincerely, much yours,

Jane Porter —

Amongst other eminent artistes, Miss Kelly was retained. The terms of her engagement we submit, as a specimen of the obligations to which managers are subject :

TERMS.—“ For three seasons, to commence on the 6th of October, and end on the 2nd of June, both inclusive, in each year, with liberty for Miss Kelly to absent herself during the six weeks in Lent ; to have the exclusive use of her dresses. Salary to be 20*l.* a week, but to be raised to equal any other actress who may be engaged. To have the most desirable dressing-room, with not more than one other lady, of the highest rank and respectability ; the liberty to decline any new part or character, and also such parts, in old pieces, as she does not consider adapted to her powers ; to enjoy all privileges and indulgences granted to the most favoured performer ; to be exempted from the condition of the sick clause, whenever sickness, &c., shall arise out of the exercise of her pro-

fession, or any consequence thereof. This engagement to apply to Drury Lane Theatre only."

This paper was drawn up with all legal formality.

On the 28th she wrote, wondering the preparation of her articles of engagement should have so long escaped his recollection: "*At all events you must not forget that, it is my resolution never to set my foot within the doors of any theatre till the stipulations for my comfort shall be delivered to me, with the security of signature and seal;*"—and concluded by desiring the manager not to depend upon her at rehearsals till her proposed agreement was settled.

On Thursday, the 30th September, about two hundred friends were specially invited to view the new decorations, &c., of Drury Lane Theatre. The house presented a striking and brilliant effect. The entrance, comprehending the grand staircase and vestibule, was restored to its primitive colour. Dixon's inimitable basso relievoes were recovered by his own hand, and all the architectural features resumed their maiden simplicity and beauty. The fronts of the boxes were chastely ornamented, and several new stage scenes were exhibited seriatim. The company were evidently pleased by this attention of the in-coming manager, and Braham was enthusiastically welcomed on his old ground, Drury Lane, as he led the vocalists, on this occasion, in the national anthem. A ball and supper, in the

saloon, succeeded ; and the morrow's sun had "reproved their lingering revelry" before the company dispersed.

On the 4th of October, the theatre opened by an address spoken by Miss Kelly. The play, "Wild Oats," with the after-piece of "Lock and Key."*

Old favourites and new candidates were severally welcomed on their appearance, by a most animated auditory ; and on Elliston's entrance, in the part of *Rover*, the acclamations and distinct expressions of good wishes, confirmed him still a favourite child of the public, and gratified him by the encouragement of an undivided sentiment of public interest for his welfare. At the close of the play, he, of course, made a speech ;—not the least part of the evening's entertainment ; for *Rover* was never more successful, nor Franklin more elated when he first drew down electricity from the clouds.

* The following is a list of the establishment :—

Tragedy—Kean, Pope, Holland, Powell, Foote, Thompson, Mrs. West, Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Egerton, Mrs. Knight.

Comedy—Elliston, Dowton, Munden, Harley, Oxberry, Knight, Russell, Butler, Gattie, Hamblin, Barnard, Penley, Mordaunt, Hughes, Meredith, Elliott, Keeley, Mrs. Glover, Miss Kelly, Mrs. Edwin, Mrs. Mardyn, Mrs. Harlowe, Mrs. Orger.

Opera—Braham, T. Cooke, Thorne, G. Smith, Mackeon, Miss Carew, Miss Cubitt, Mrs. Bland, Miss Povey, Mrs. Austin.

• Artists—Marinari, Andrews and Son, Dixon, &c.

The musical department under the direction of Kelly. Leader, Smart, &c.

The receipts on this night amounted to 638*l.* Braham appeared on the second night, when the receipts were 500*l.* The season comprised 199 nights, and the sum of the whole receipts 44,053*l.* : an average of 220*l.* per night.

The newspaper and “periodical” applications for free admissions were more than usually pressing—one of them curious enough, which was as follows :

“ Sir,—Wishing well to you, and the vast concern you have undertaken, I really wish you *did* know Dr. Rose, whose *paragraphical* capabilities would be invaluable to you. He is a great card at Covent Garden, to which theatre he has a nightly admission for himself and *four* friends, independent of the privilege always given to the paper with which he is connected.”

In Garrick’s time, 50*l.* was yearly remitted by the press to the manager for the privilege of inserting his advertisements, while in this day, far more than that sum multiplied into itself is paid by the converse party, and frank admissions also granted, equal to the demands of a corps of yeomanry.

On the subject of newspapers: poor Wewitzer, now past his labour, being in his seventy-first year, applied for an engagement. Elliston advised him to claim the Covent Garden Fund, to which he had subscribed for more than thirty years: the fund would produce him 60*l.* a year, and Elliston very

kindly promised to allow him an additional twenty. This the newspapers called an act of cruelty towards the veteran actor, and a promise which he never meant to perform. The annuity was regularly paid, *quarterly, and always in advance*, to the day of his death. That Wewitzer did not think with the newspapers, his letter will prove :

“ DEAR SIR,—I received your kind letter of yesterday, and am covered with gratitude for your bountiful annuity. I will take your advice,—apply to the fund as soon as the gentlemen come to town. As I have your leave, I will draw on you now, for I am in great distress. Let me assure you, I consider myself under the deepest obligation to you. *God bless you*, and may you prosper, will be the sincere wish of your grateful, devoted, and humble servant, for ever,

“ RALPH WEWITZER.”

Elliston was enjoined by his lease to pay 400*l.* to Mr. Peake, as treasurer, for the first season ; besides a considerable sum to his assistant in the same office. Peake, a few years afterwards, became the victim to a cruel conspiracy, and was compelled, in consequence, to absent himself from England.

This gentleman had been executor to a near relative, who directed a certain sum of money to be paid to his daughter, on her attaining the age of twenty-

five years. She married soon after she was of legal age, and for the purpose of establishing the young couple in what appeared to be an eligible concern, Peake, at the earnest solicitation of both parties, transferred to the husband the entire amount which he held in trust for his wife. The husband, who turned out to be a mere *adventurer*, soon dissipated the property, and, jointly with his wife, commenced an action against poor Peake for his neglect as trustee, and the recovery of the original bequest. Ingratitude, and the inevitable result of the trial, drove this unfortunate gentleman from his country. He died at Boulogne in 1829.

Peake was forty years treasurer to Drury Lane Theatre, to which office he had been appointed by Sheridan. Such was the drought in the exchequer at times, that it was considered vexatious in an actor to apply, on two consecutive weeks, for his salary. In the old, or " Garrick's Theatre," as it was called, there was no retreat from the apartment of the perplexed treasurer, under circumstances of cash clamour ; and Peake has often been kept a prisoner in his own insolvent territory for hours together, not daring to unbar the door on the rush of his assailants. But in the new theatre of 1794, matters were ordered more wisely ; the window of the treasury was constructed to open on the colonnade, in Little Russel-street, so that on blank Saturdays, when there was no money, the *sinécure* cashier might

make himself equally scarce, and leave the besiegers to do their worst, on the other side of the double-locked entrance.

When not under parliamentary protection, Sheridan constituted the houses of his treasurer and solicitor his sanctuary, where for weeks together he has remained concealed. At the residence of Peake, he not only took up his own quarters, but invited his acquaintances to the same indulgence; it being a sorry joke with him to offer his friends a dinner at "*THE Treasury*," where, beyond all doubt, he was First Lord.

Peake, in his official capacity, had almost daily applications for money from the Sheridans, father and son, to whom, at times, a guinea was indeed an object. For example—

"DEAR DICKEY,—To-morrow I purpose setting off for Stafford town, if I can raise the supplies. I want 20*l.* to start with, and on the road I have a hoard lying *perdue*, that will carry me through. Write me an answer; but, above all, don't disappoint me as to cash—my father gives me *none*.

"T. SHERIDAN."

The father's letters were always for money,—very short; and though scarcely legible, yet intelligible enough for that purpose; and (except when very angry), signed with his initials only.

“DEAR PEAKE,—*Thirty* pounds by return of post, and I am with you in seven hours. R. B. S.”

“DEAR PEAKE,—Beg, borrow, or steal; but let me have thirty pounds, and send them by return of post. Fear nothing, be civil to all claimants. Shut up the office, and write to me directly. R. B. S.”

DEAR PEAKE,—Without fail, and immediately give the bearer five guineas to buy hay and corn for my coach-horses; they have not had a morsel of either since last night. I shall be with you presently. R. B. S.”

“DEAR PEAKE,—Give Johnston a little money to go on with—keep as punctual with Kemble as you can—borrow, and fear not. Put 60*l.* in your pocket, and come to me directly. R. B. S.”

“Twenty pounds more will not break our backs. Let them go by nine in the morning to Hammersley’s, to answer my draft given to-day to the St. Patrick’s Society. R. B. S.”

Sheridan was very anxious that no disappointment should take place respecting his check given to St. Patrick’s Charity. Peake was therefore told to have a person in waiting, who remained at the banker’s counter till the check was presented, that the money, if paid in, might not be appropriated to the over-drawings.

Sheridan's indolence was hardly to be credited. In the affair and duel between Mathews and himself, at Bath, respecting Miss Linley, through the influence of his antagonist with certain newspapers, Sheridan's character was greatly injured by the most gross misrepresentations;—he was strongly urged by a much-valued friend to reply to the attacks made upon him almost daily. "They are not yet sufficiently strong," said he, "for me to crush them; but, from the rapid progress they are making, they *will* be *very soon*." "Then why not," said his friend, "do that yourself?" "What mean you?" asked Sheridan. "Why, abuse yourself, and then answer it." "A happy thought!—I'll do it." He instantly sat down and wrote a letter, abusing himself most abundantly. To his great delight, this appeared the following day in the paper: it was now "sufficiently strong;" but such was Sheridan's indolence, he could never *find time to make the reply*.

It was at Peake's house Sheridan became acquainted with a Major Downs, familiarly called "Billy Downs," and connected with Peake's family by marriage. Billy Downs held a commission in the St. James's Volunteers, in which corps Sheridan himself was enrolled. As Sheridan's letters must be always acceptable, we beg to transcribe the following, addressed to the Major:—

"DEAR MAJOR,—I have called on you once or twice, and on *military* business ; but I shall now only say a word on what I think is pressing at this moment. No corps of volunteers should receive the communications of the Speaker of the House of Commons without *returning a proper answer*, to be communicated through the lord-lieutenant to Mr. Speaker. This has always been the practice when generals, admirals, and seamen, &c. &c., have been thanked ;—the answers are read in the House by the Speaker, and entered on the journals. The record and its effect in the present case, will have the best consequences, and, *I can assure you*, it is both expected and desired by the Minister and by the Speaker. I should have taken the liberty of writing to Lord Amherst, but that I have not the honour of knowing him. You will make such communication on the subject as you think proper. I wish to see the example set by the St. James's Volunteers. I need not add that the answer should be *short* and *spirited*. I see no objection to its being signed by all the officers—certainly by the principal ones—and it will remain a record on our journals for their posterity to read to the end of time.

Yours truly
R. B. Sheridan

“ I shall return to town on Wednesday or Thursday at latest.”

On Saturday, the 19th February, Madame Vestris made her *entrée* on the English stage, at Drury Lane, in the part of *Lilla*, in the “ Siege of Belgrade.” This lady was introduced by Corri. For the first few nights Madame Vestris did not appear to make any great impression on the audience, but, before the end of the season, she acquired that popularity, which she has since maintained undiminished.

Kean also, at this period, made his first appearance in the character of *Coriolanus*; and we shall not be accused of harshness, in declaring it one of the worst pieces of acting ever witnessed on these classic boards. He had neither the ideal, the physical nor mental qualities for the impersonation—the indiscretion of the attempt was as remarkable as the failure was without redemption.

The receipt on the first night was great, being 561*l.*; but Kean’s attraction, on the whole, during this season, was weak and unproductive. On one night the returns were not 100*l.*

Dowton being invited to join Elliston’s standard, thus writes to him:—

“ MY DEAR ELLISTON,—Knowing what your feelings are respecting this *big-letter system*, as well as the positive injury the continuance of

it must be to the interest of the theatre, I am satisfied you will use every endeavour, for all our sakes, to abandon it. If this little gentleman has really an article with the old committee, in which it was stipulated he should be seen in *big letters*, I should suggest *great A*, to be the fittest character. But soberly, I agree with you, that you are in honour bound to insult the whole profession by obeying the articles already entered into by the committee; but I am sure you yourself will never be a party to so contemptible an agreement for the future."*

In the beginning of April, Dowton was announced for the part of *Dr. Cantwell*, unfortunately in the Kean type. On the next morning came the following to the manager:—

"MY DEAR ELLISTON,—I am sorry you have done this. You know well what I mean—this cursed quackery; these big letters! I cannot endure that my name should be so particularized—there is a want of respectability about it; or rather, a notoriety, which gives one the feeling of some absconded

* The words in Kean's engagement, dated January, 1818, were "And also that his name shall be continued in the bills of performance, in the same manner as it is at present," viz. large letters. In defence of him we remember, somewhere, to have heard of a lad whose grandmother pronounced him born for an atheist, because he spelt Jehovah with a small *j*.

felon, against whom a Hue and Cry is made public. Or if there be really any advantage in it, why should I, or any single individual, take it over the rest of our brethren? But it has a nasty disreputable look, and I have fancied the whole day the finger of the town pointed at me, as much as to say, "That is he—now for the reward!" Leave this expedient to the police officers, or to those who may have a taste for it—I have none.

"Yours, my dear Elliston, W. DOWTON."

By a singular coincidence and error of the compositor, Kean's name, just at this moment, appeared in the bills in small letters. The tragedian played that evening, but the next morning an epistle reached Elliston from the Kean's solicitor—*Pica versus Brevier*—announcing that the agreement between actor and manager had been thereby cancelled:

"Then a quarrel arose, some aspersions were cast,

"But for decency's sake, we'll not mention what past."

By a ready *amende*, however, on the part of Elliston, the offence was forgiven, and Kean was once again declared CAPITAL in his parts.

Elliston still found time for a trip into the north; and whilst at Doncaster, during the grand meeting, great difficulty existed in respect of beds and accommodation for the numerous visitors. Elliston

had to seek his night's fortune ; he had no bed in view—no chance of repose whatever. This state of things happened to become a subject of conversation at the house where he was then a guest, and his friend Mr. H—— jocularly congratulated himself that he had been able to secure a pillow at the “ Old Angel.” As the party assembled were likely to sit late, and Elliston felt himself really fatigued, he retired at an early hour, and making his way, bag in hand, to the “ Angel” in question, boldly demanded the apartment which had been engaged for Mr. H——. The landlady, by no means doubting he was the identical gentleman who had settled for No. 9, at once admitted him to the sleeping-room, when Elliston desiring, on no account, he should be disturbed by noisy companions, deliberately locked the door, and as deliberately went to bed.

At about two o'clock in the morning a thundering knock at the gates of the “ Old Angel” announced a visitor, who, reasonably enough, happened to be Mr. H——, at that time of the morning, anxious enough to turn in. The state of ebriety, however, in which he was, and the precaution which had been given by our hero that he might not be disturbed by any rake-helly companion, was quite enough for our host of the “ Angel ” to give the fancied intruder an ungentle reception—the event was, that after a noisy altercation, in which



the real lessee of the bed in question decidedly got the worst, he was compelled to retire, and embrace whatever fortune might turn up for him in the pious streets of Doncaster. By six o'clock the following morning, Elliston was on his way to London.

Measures were taken in the season, 1820, for the revival of Shakspeare's "King Lear" at Drury Lane. Kean had a passionate desire for playing the part, and in the scenic preparations was personally busy. Amongst other effects he had a surpassing notion for the storm. Kean had seen a mechanical exhibition in Spring Gardens (the remains of Louthenburg's "Eidophusicon") in which very striking procellous effects had been produced, and which he fancied very available to his purpose. The proprietor was introduced at Drury Lane with this object, but he at once saw the impracticability of the scheme on such an immense area as the stage of Drury Lane. The storm, though given up on these grounds, was presently transferred to the bosom of the tragedian. Disappointment rendered him furious. To the magnitude and ruinous expense of the undertaking, Kean was positively deaf—there was either to be a storm on the stage or no peace in the theatre. To meet his wishes, a great part of the scheme was carried into operation, and admirably executed by the artists of Drury Lane. The scenic trees were composed of distinct boughs which

undulated in the wind ; each leaf was a separate pendant rustling with the expressive sound of nature itself. The artists were greatly extolled.

“ Some carve the trunk, and breathing shapes bestow,
Giving the trees more life than where they grow.”

The very success of this scene was fatal to the fame of Kean, in undertaking the part of *Lear* ; otherwise his acting must have been poor indeed. The storm carried away the greater part of the applause on the few nights “ *Lear* ” was represented ; and public criticism pronounced that, amidst all the leaves in the forest, not a wreath was to be found to crown the brows of the actor. *Lear* was one of Kean’s failures, a fact which he could never feel, and the “ gratissimus error ” held him to the last.*

Elliston was much annoyed by a conspiracy in the Theatre, in the nature of “ a strike ” amongst the actors. This strike took place on the question of “ the sick clause,” a privilege which had been lately much abused by *sick actors* not being able to play, whenever whitebait offered an engagement at Greenwich, or any part in the drama being deemed too heavy for the stomach. A meeting was convened on the subject, at which Mr. Calcrafft pre-

* A tree was prepared for “ The Royal Oak,” at the Haymarket Theatre, on which every leaf, to the amount of 9000, was separate. It cost nearly one hundred pounds—the whole affair was ineffective.

sided ; but nothing could be done for poor Elliston. The "ægrotat" was a stubborn disease, and there was no cure for it. Actors were, as usual, armed with medical certificates under all kinds of indispositions, so that a clean bill was rarely seen within the walls of Drury.

A melo-drame, called "Therese," was produced, in which Miss Kelly was the heroine—and inimitable, indeed, was her acting. On a certain occasion, "Giovanni" having been advertised for representation, Madame Vestris is sick, and sure enough there is a certificate to prove it. "Giovanni" is consequently given up, and "Therese" put up. Within two hours Miss Kelly is sick, and there is another certificate, equally clear and satisfactory. "Harlequin versus Shakspeare" (a farcical drama taken from Garrick's Harlequin's Invasion) is the last substitute for the night's entertainment, when Munden (*Joe Snip*) has most unaccountably a sudden attack of gout—he is sick ; on which all doubts are removed by a certificate to the direct fact. We have known a lady so cruelly affected with this endemic, that she could not act her part, and, on the very night in question, indulging her egritute behind the scenes, by contemptuously criticising her impromptu substitute in the character. "O si sick omnes !"

Montaigne relates a curious story, which he believes to have read in Appian, of one, who, to

escape the proscriptions of the triumviri of Rome, counterfeited having but one eye, by wearing a patch over the other. But when he fancied himself safe, and removed the plaster, he found he had a little overrated his part, for he had lost the sight of that eye altogether, through the incautious experiment.

Experience itself is not infallible. In May, a play, intitled “ Virginus,” written by Captain Barlow, was represented at Drury Lane, Mr. Kean sustaining the principal part. So high an opinion had Elliston of this drama, that he voluntarily paid the author 200*l.* for the copyright before it was acted. The play was damned by faint praise on the first night, and on the third went out like the snuff of a candle.



CHAPTER IX.

An impostor—His letter to Elliston—"Giovanni in London"—Kean plays "Jaffier"—Dances with Miss Valancy—Jack and the Bean Stalk—Elliston in repartee—Drury Lane portico—A bust of Kean—A lady and child—Mr. Pope—A poet in Warwick Castle—Miss Ann Wilson—Elliston's puffs—Miss Wilson's extraordinary success—The New Monthly Magazine—A pointed article—Mrs. Siddons and Miss Wilson—Miss Wilson's failure—Mr. Cooper's deposition—John Cooper—An anonymous friend—His Majesty at Drury Lane Theatre—A private conference—Frailties—Death of Mrs. Elliston—"Invisibline's" letter—Mr. Frederick Reynolds' letter—"Marino Faliero"—Elliston and Lord Eldon—Further accounts—"The Times" newspaper—Letter from Douglas Kinnaird—Mrs. Elliston's remains.

To those who have lived in what is called the world, and have a ready perception of the variety of shifts by which the cunning ride downily on the shoulders of the credulous, the annexed letter will be only amusing; to those less enlightened in the *griveleries* of the town, its publication may be a timely hint. The following impudent attempt at extortion was made on our hero :

"Mr. and Mrs. Elliston having acquired so much celebrity, may probably be desirous of that rank in society they are so well entitled to. Although knighthood was conferred upon the late Sir William Parson, and has been upon Sir William Stevenson

and Sir George Smart, his late and present majesty, notwithstanding their delight in the drama, have not conferred any honour or distinction on eminent histrionic professors. Actresses have been more fortunately circumstanced, and have attained nobility by marriage. The late king of Spain created the celebrated Italian, Signor Carlo Broschi, better known as Farinelli, a knight of the order of Calatrava. The late Sir John Gallini, maitre de danse, who married Lady Elizabeth Bertie, a sister of the late Earl of Abingdon, was a knight of the Golden Spur, of which order the present Lord Clifford is a knight. An immense number of British officers and civilians are knights of foreign orders.

The same rank and dignity may be obtained for Mr. Elliston in a foreign order, of which several British nobles and men of rank have been and now are knights, for a thousand guineas, if that sum be deposited with a banker, (who would be ignorant of the purpose,) in order to be paid upon production of the diploma of creation, under seal and the gold enamelled jewel and ribbon of the illustrious order of St. — ; out of which sum the fees of honour to the officers of the chancery of the order would be discharged. Or on payment of one-third of that sum prompt, Mr. E.'s personal engagement would be accepted for the residue. The dignified object might be obtained in about two months. Mr. E. would, of course, become Sir R. W. E., and Mrs. E. would, consequently, be intitled

Lady Elliston, which rank the elegance of her manners would dignify. Their chariot and seal would be decorated with the relative insignia betokening the rank possessed. As it is customary to announce promotions in the public journals, that proposed might be inserted without comment, or as follows :—‘ We understand that a foreign prince (or princess) was so enraptured with the histrionic talents of Mr. Elliston, that his Serene Highness obtained his creation as chevalier de l’ordre tres illustre de St. —, of which the late immortal hero, Lord Nelson, and other British nobles and men of rank were or are knights. Our favourite, therefore, is now become Sir R. W. E.’

“ The suggested confidential arrangement will never transpire. The writer begs to assure Mr. E. that he is addressed by a gentleman and man of honour, possessing the most sincere intentions, and most certainly the requisite influence to obtain the proposed dignity ; that he has already effected the like, and will, on a note being addressed to Mr. St. George, care of Mr. Tyler, stationer, Grafton-street, Fitzroy-square, have the pleasure of meeting Mr. E., in order to enter into the preliminary arrangements to proceed for him.

“ He possibly might, on enquiry, have discovered a confidential friend of Mr. E., to whom he might have explained the extraordinary influence he possesses, in order that he might communicate the same to Mr. E. ; but it is obviously best

that the treaty be known only to the parties themselves.

"The writer trusts that no apology will be required for this valuable suggestion, but that he will receive gratitude for his candour and benevolence. He begs to assure both Mr. and Mrs. Elliston of his unfeigned respect.

" London, 29th May, 1820."

In May of this season, Elliston produced the most popular and successful afterpiece of his whole management, " Giovanni in London." Madame Vestris, who was so attractive in the principal character, undertook it, in the first instance, with much reluctance; but the flattering reception which she nightly received, soon reconciled her to it, and constituted a great portion of that fame which has since been her freehold. The nightly half-price receipts for " Giovanni" averaged very nearly one hundred pounds.

Elliston, who had at this time on his hands, as appendix to Drury Lane, the Leamington undertaking, comprehending a handsome library, a magnificent ball-room with two contiguous private houses, a law-suit respecting this very building, and a theatre in the same town, entered on a further speculation—namely, a provincial Vauxhall! which was to possess all the attractions of our metropolitan establishment, in a duodecimo form.

The work certainly appeared ; but to use the language of the trade, it fell dead from the press. The singers, the suppers, the fireworks, all failed. The last desperate effort was made in the form of a public breakfast, but this also failed—everything failed, but Elliston's spirits ; and the Leamington Vauxhall acres soon suggested to our minds the lines of Colman—

" Promoting still the neighbourhood's increase,
By " Ground to let upon a Building Lease."

Kean was now preparing for his trip to America, and announced his benefit at Drury Lane for the 12th of June. The play was " Venice Preserved," in which he acted *Jaffier*, and Elliston *Pierre*. Their merits were about on a par, but with the quality we will not trouble the reader. The great attraction of the evening was a new farce, as it was called, written by Charles Dibdin, entitled, " The Admirable Crichton," in which Kean impersonated *Καρ' εἰσχυν*, the hero.

By virtue of this gallimaufry, Kean was to act, speak, sing, dance, fence, give theatrical imitations of various players, and perform a thousand " tumbling tricks," as *Christopher Sly* expresses it. The first act of astonishment was Kean at the pianoforte, on which he accompanied himself in an original song, which, by the bye, Crichton-like, ought to have been of his own composing. He then exhibited himself in an *assaut des*

armes with Mr. O'Shaugnessy, in which, of course, he came off victor, giving the Irishman his life by a graceful bow. He then danced a *pas de deux* with Miss Valancy, in which, on a clear stage and no favour, he was fairly the conqueror; for the lady, who was growing fat and scant of breath, pleaded earnestly in dumb show, against the importunities for an *encore*, whilst Kean himself came crowing to the ring. An awful pause, however, transpired between the first and second acts, and the spectators, who had hitherto been so indulgent, now manifested their impatience by pretty palpable hisses. Mr. Russell then stepped forward, and explained that Mr. Kean having sprained his ancle in the last pirouette, was undergoing the application of a little spirit, but would resume his extraordinary efforts in a few minutes.

The scene was presently raised, and discovered Drury's tragedian, like *Cato*, seated in a comfortable arm-chair, from which he gave physiological portraits, or, in other words, imitations* of sundry actors; and though, occasionally, we were reminded of Mathews' story, "Which is the

* Escourt was a great "giver of imitations." He was in the habit of "taking off" Lords Somers, Halifax, Godolphin, and others, for the amusement of Sir Godfrey Kneller. On one occasion, by a hint given him from Craggs, he mimicked Kneller, in his presence, whereat the painter, with sudden simplicity, observed, "Nay, nay—you're out there—that's not myself."

lion, and which is the dog?"—"Either you please, my little gentleman;"—yet all passed off well, inasmuch, as the house was crowded to the ceiling, and nearly 700*l.* received at the doors.

The pantomime which Elliston produced in this, his first season, "Jack and the Bean Stalk," was, perhaps, the most successful of all his Christmas offerings. According to the author, it was the duty of Jack to mount this gigantic "stalk," which, reaching from the stage floor to the very roof of the theatre, little Miss Povey very properly declined undertaking. For this feat, it was necessary to find a substitute, as similar to Miss Povey in figure as possible—the sex immaterial. On one of the rehearsal mornings, Winston, in passing Bedford Street, Covent Garden, descried near the coachstand a lad, acting as waterman's devil, whom he fancied suited to the purpose. Like the infant *Lama* of Thibet, the youth bore about him the sign, which was not lost on the priestly penetration of the seer, Winston, who at once perceived in the little devil all the indications of a god, and carried him off *tout-a-coup* to the sanctuary of Drury Lane. The difficulty was now got over—the boy was retained,—the pantomime produced,—and as Miss Povey's scendent "double," he nightly appeared.

On the following season, Hullin and his pupils

were engaged at Drury Lane ; and, on a certain evening, he having lost one of his troop, with a prophetic faculty, similar to that of Winston, selected the same lad, who had by this time acquired a soul above watermen, and enlisted him in the vacant place. The boy said he believed his name was Sullivan.

In February, 1833, Madame Duvernay and M. Paul, with *M. Silvain*, as principal dancer from the “Academie Royale,” Paris, appeared at Drury Lane Theatre—*M. Silvain* being no other than our little “Jack” Sullivan, the waterman’s devil of Bedford Street. *M. Silvain* was subsequently principal dancer at the St. James’s Theatre, and became an artist of considerable merit, and a highly respectable member of society.

The readiness of Elliston at repartee, and quickness in that intellectual gladiatorship, so frequently occurring in dramatic life, we have elsewhere alluded to. George Robins, the auctioneer, coming one morning on the stage of Drury Lane, after a first appearance of some young actor, observed to Elliston, “The youth bids fair to rise.” “Yes,” replied the manager, pointing to other members of his company, “but there are other biddings against him.”

On another occasion, of this season, some one observed to Elliston that a certain singer he had

produced, without great success, had still a "fine volume of voice." "True," responded Robert William; "but I wish there were a few more notes to the publication."

During the recess, Elliston projected a portico, for the grand entrance from Brydges Street to his theatre, which, if carried into effect in conformity with his design, would have been useful, ornamental, and executed at a reasonable expense. The difficulties he had to encounter in the completion of the hideous covered way which now defaces the elevation of Drury Lane, were innumerable. First, the parish (for what earthly reason no one can tell) violently opposed the measure; the district surveyor next threw rubbish in the way. Mr. Soane then puzzled both the question and the district surveyor, and introduced a Mr. Spiller, who perplexed all parties. Between the latter two, the excrescence now protruding into Brydges Street from the wall of the theatre, was fomented. Elliston had nothing in the world to do with it—except, indeed, paying the expenses, which literally amounted to the enormous sum of 1050*l*.! A foundation was laid which might have supported a church tower, in which loads of money returned to their mother earth, but no mine of wealth opened to poor Elliston. The sum for which Mr. Hardwick would have contracted to execute Elliston's first design, was three hundred pounds.

Before Kean's departure for America he presented a plaster bust of himself to the proprietors of the theatre, on the condition of its being placed in the principal Green-room. Some doubts were raised as to the propriety of introducing the effigy of a living actor (particularly under engagements at the theatre) amongst the monumental *simulacra* of departed greatness ; but Kean had "set his life upon a cast," and the cast was accordingly set upon a bracket.

The ceremony observed on this event was no niggard affair. Russell, supporting the bust in question, led the way from Kean's dressing-room. The great living tragedian then followed. Elliston was next in succession ; and the rear was brought up by sundry actors and gentlemen dangles at the theatre. On the procession reaching the Green-room, the bust was placed on its appropriate bracket. Elliston made a speech, and so did Kean ; the former was extremely eloquent ; modesty, perhaps, forbade an equal display on the part of the latter, for, however flattered he might have felt, it is beyond a doubt he was far from eloquent. An elegant supper closed the occasion ; the result of which found many ready, at least in their places, if not in their senses, at the next morning's rehearsal.

In the early part of the same evening, a somewhat ludicrous incident occurred. Winston, observing a stranger passing off from behind the

scenes, demanded of one of the porters, who and what he was? "Oh, sir," said the man, "it's the person who brought in the lady and child just now, for Mr. Elliston."

"Lady and child!" repeated the consterned acting-manager. "We can have no lady and child here. Where are they?"

"In your room, sir," was the reply, "according to Mr. Elliston's desire."

Poor Winston, the most moral creature in the world, and yet a fast friend of our hero, the lessee, began now to fancy that another of those numerous cases was thrown upon his hands, for extricating his associate from some thoughtless dilemma. At this moment Elliston himself was passing the scenes, on which Winston, approaching him, demanded, somewhat in a tone of reproof, what woman he had thought proper to introduce into his apartment.

"Woman?" repeated Elliston, in amazement.

"Yes, and there's a child, too," whispered the acting-manager.

"Then, 'fore gad," cried *Charles Surface*, "I'll have her out!" and away he crossed to the chamber in question. In went Elliston, in unaffected ignorance of the case, when sure enough the woman and child stood, with unblushing impudence, directly in his path; the same being a painting which Elliston had picked up two days before at a sale,

supposed to be the portrait of Mrs. Catherine Philips, the "Matchless Orinda," which he intended to present to Charles Mathews, but had altogether forgotten the circumstance.

In September, the Olympic Theatre was let to Messrs. George Reeve (the adopted son of Reeve, the composer,) and Barlow, (author of the unsuccessful tragedy of "Virginius,") for fourteen years, at a yearly rent of 1000*l*. In a few months, the lessees were declared insolvent.

In the meanwhile Drury again underwent improvements, and was re-embellished ; and on Saturday, 28th of October, Elliston issued his three hundred cards of invitation to the dramatic *dilettanti*, for the purpose of viewing his theatre and partaking his good cheer. Elliston was indeed one who "could never make prudence keep pace with liberality, for the life of him," and, in this instance, experienced the thankless return of abuse for his hospitality.

The portico or covered way, was not finished when the theatre opened for Elliston's second season, and the scaffolding was unremoved until a month afterwards. This campaign commenced with "Romeo and Juliet," in which old Pope was cast for *Friar Lawrence* ; but as he declared he had never played any part but *Romeo*, and that, for

thirty-seven years, he was justly entitled to it on this occasion, and refused the cowl of the ghostly friar.

Pope was apt to set himself up as a kind of oracle in the theatre, on the plea of his being of the "good old school;" but remembering his frailty for the good things also of the table, we might be inclined to believe that, if he were really an augur, he consulted no entrails but his own.

A certain dramatic author, of very available capacity for *impromptu*, interludes, and the like; where the supply is of far greater consequence at the moment than the quality, had been retained in the summer of 1820 by Elliston, and was supposed to be then residing in the manager's house at Leamington, employed in composing a new "guide" to that fashionable watering-place. Elliston rather unexpectedly receives the following from his literary purveyor, who had been suddenly carried off one morning, like Proserpine, whilst culling flowers in the meadows, by a couple of Plutonic emissaries, or, in other words, rascally bailiffs, to Warwick Castle :

"The harlequinade by which I was so adroitly whisked off, whilst believing, like *Barnwell's* uncle in Camberwell Grove, 'no danger lurked unseen,' may amuse you; or, rather like *Gregory*, in the 'Mock Doctor,' I received my diploma whilst cutting sticks in the forest, and was carried away to the college,

in which I am now matriculated. Pray do not come here; I neither wish to see you nor any one else in this place. Here am I, chained up with old dead authors, in a Mezentius state of felicity. But, 'le bon-temps viendra'—great good is yet in store for me. Depend on it, this event will prove the foundation of my future fortune. I feel all Phœnix. I have now time on my hands; I will take him by the forelock—though the devil fetch all *locks* for me.

"I will touch off the *Guide* in admirable style—Leamington! No; like Maria Edgeworth, your name should be identified with the place you have rendered famous, 'Ellistontown.

"That old harridan, Mrs. Hornby, has gone from 'Shakspeare House,' and shews the "antiquities" opposite. The sacrilegious crone whitewashed the walls, and has destroyed the collection of autographs. 'Yea, verily, (in my book,) she shall have her reward.' "

At this time, one of those chronic instances of popular infirmity took place, which the world is subject to, in the theatrical part of its organization. Elliston had made an engagement with Mr. Welsh, to receive his pupil, Miss Ann Wilson, as principal singer at Drury Lane. The terms were twenty guineas per night,—a benefit,—twenty free nightly admissions; and sundry other privileges.

Having made his bed, it was to be bolstered up, and no sooner was the agreement signed, than

Elliston "respectfully informed the public that, in order to render the operatic force of Drury Lane Theatre superior to any combination ever before witnessed in that establishment, his exertions in obtaining a young lady, whose vocal excellence and execution, the musical world had acknowledged beyond all precedent, had been crowned with success; and it was now with the greatest feelings of pleasure he announced the engagement of Miss Wilson, whose first appearance would take place, on Thursday, the 18th instant, in the character of *Mandane*.*

* "Artaxerxes" was first produced at Covent Garden Theatre, on the 2nd of February, 1762. It was acted only eight nights during the season, on account of the theatre, one of which was commanded by the king, and a ninth time for the benefit of Miss Brent. No afterpiece was given with it. As there were not sufficient English singers to sustain the characters, two Italians were engaged, their parts were given in a strange mixture of Italian and English. The original cast was:—

Artaxerxes,	- -	Signor Peretti,
Arbaces,	- -	Signor Tenducci,
Artabanes,	- -	Mr. Beard,
Rimenes,	- -	Mr. Mattocks,
Mandane,	- -	Miss Brent,
		[Pupil of Dr. Arne, her first appearance,]
Semira,	- -	Miss Thomas.

On the 24th of March, 1763, "Artaxerxes" was announced for representation, with the same performers, except a new Semira. It was intimated to the managers, that half-price would be demanded, which they resisted. A great riot was the consequence; the house was closed for four nights to repair the damage, amounting to upwards of 500*l*. The opera was not performed again until the 8th of March; half-price was then taken, but no farce given—merely a trifling dance.

Miss Wilson's reception was certainly (to use Elliston's favourite term) unprecedented. Her master presided in the orchestra at the pianoforte, an instrument which he had selected for its extraordinary force, and placed it level with the stage. By his skill, he contrived that this instrument, like charity itself, should cover a multitude of sins; for whenever the lady exhibited any indications of frailty, in stepped the charitable *forte*, and administered its remedies copiously.

Miss Wilson was now the rage; what quassia had been remotely, and hydropathy is, immediately, so was Miss Wilson in the meanwhile—namely, a remedy for every sorrow—a “Wilson's drop,” which completely superseded its vaunted predecessor, and a nostrum which called to our mind the occasional song of Mr. Horace Twiss, the burden of which was—

“And Buonaparte take the world,
But give us Master Betty.”

One of Miss Wilson's panegyrists announced—
“This lady combines the force of Grassini, the science of Billington, the execution of Catalani, and the sweetness of Stephens.”

Miss Wilson's first appearance produced 488*l.*, when the average of receipts was not more than 180*l.*

But all this rhapsody, true or false, was at least found in its proper place—namely, the newspapers;

but, Elliston, by his enormous red ink puffs in the very playbills themselves, had usurped the critical functions of the newspaper and magazine—for example—

“ Miss Wilson continues to support the high character which the public have affixed to her professional efforts, and the whole of the operatic company enjoy a patronage which is without any parallel in dramatic history. It is necessary to state, that no alterations have been made in the original text in the opera of “ Love in a Village,” excepting the omission of some interpolations which, though sanctioned by usage and time, were absolute buffoonery, and could not but be repugnant to the feeling of every tasteful audience. With respect also to the original music, only three pieces, and those decidedly ineffective, have been omitted; and that omission allowed for the purpose of introducing airs, the chief part of which the public had previously stamped with their well-judged approbation.”

This was very good-naturedly commented upon by the then editor of a popular magazine, who is now a leader at the bar, and a distinguished writer—“ This comes from a quarter,” said he, “ where we have little deserved such injury, for we have always had a peculiar regard for the publica-

tions which would now become our rivals; we allude, of course, to the elaborate audacity of the play-bills, which, fatally for their own interest as well as ours, affect a style and claim a place in this age of criticism—‘This is the most unkindest cut of all.’—Was it not enough that they were regarded as the pleasantest of all but very extraordinary gazettes?—that we hurried on whenever they gleamed upon us in the streets, and read them fifty times over? Were they not the ‘abstracts and brief chronicles’ of the mirth and the sentiment of thousands? Was not a collection of them regarded as the most precious of literary curiosities, as forming a series of golden links in a chain of delight; as bringing back a thousand crowding recollections of heartiest enjoyment; or as awakening a kind of antique sympathy with the living joys of those who now can laugh and weep no longer? With what sensation did we once look upon a play-bill, of the time of Garrick—how did he and all his fellows seem to be, even then, tasting and diffusing the rarest pleasure, and all the fine atmosphere of town gaiety to be breathing around us!

“In a country town, far distant from London, a play-bill makes us feel ourselves at home at once. We remember, some time ago, being present at a distant assize where, towards the close of a weary day, a cause was tried originating in a dispute at a

provincial theatre, and the play-bill of the night was produced to the court and jury, with these fascinating words at the head—‘For the benefit of Miss S. Booth.’ It was pleasant to observe the eagerness with which it was seized and read over and over again, by the younger barristers—how even the king’s counsel vouchsafed a glance, and the learned serjeant (the writer now holds that elevation) honoured it with a reminiscent smile; it lightened the sad burden of the time, and ‘made a sunshine in the shady place.’ The long argument on a point of special pleading which followed, had no power utterly to dissipate the happy sensation which it excited. Why, therefore, were not the managers content? why must they encroach on the province of the newspapers, the magazines, the reviews? their announcements require no garnishing. There is a world of enjoyment implied in almost every line, which notes and comments only weaken—the names of Elliston, Munden, Liston, Miss Kelly, or Mrs. Glover, speak for themselves. ‘If orators like these can’t move the hearts, words surely may be dumb.’

“But, alas! the analytical spirit of the age—that spirit which has made the charity children judges of poetic genius—has reached even these, and gradually they have declined from that classical simplicity, which once so well became them; they expand into eloquence, they condense

into antithesis, they blossom into metaphor, they grow comparative and controversial, and modestly accuse each other of puffing, in the style of *Peachum* and *Lockit*. But the great lessee of old Drury exhausts all existing varieties of type, and then, ‘imagines new.’ Not satisfied with expatiating at the head and foot of his bills, and with announcing his great actors, in great letters in the body, he thrusts his comments into the very middle, severing the play and farce with unhallowed violence, and interposing his own criticism, where Miss Wilson bears her blushing honours, *in red capitals*, thick upon her.”

On the 25th January, Mrs. Siddons was present at Drury Lane, and sat in Lady Harcourt’s box. At the close of the performance, she was conducted by Elliston into the Green-room, “Where,” says the *Morning Post*, “she complimented Miss Wilson in the most flattering terms that probably were ever addressed to a candidate for theatrical fame. She said: ‘I know not which to admire more,—your enchanting voice, or superior acting; but they form such a combination as surpasses any previous effort on this or any other stage.’ “Miss Wilson’s second performance,” adds the same authority, “was witnessed by Mr. and Mrs. Coutts, in company with Lord Erskine. When it was concluded, they went into the Green-room,

with Sir Thomas Tyrwhit, Lords Yarmouth and Lennox, Mr. Ellice, and others, and expressed their high admiration of her singing. Mr. Coutts has been a theatrical amateur for more than sixty years; and he assured the fair *débutante* that she surpassed all the *Mandanes* he had heard during that period.' Lord Erskine and Mrs. Coutts paid her similar compliments. The health of Miss Wilson was then drunk in sparkling Champagne. A few days after, Miss Wilson received from Mrs. Coutts a 50*l.* bank-note, with which she purchased, and presented to Mr. Welsh, a handsome silver tea-pot, sugar-bason, and cream-jug."

Miss Wilson's second character was *Rosetta*, and *Rosetta* was a failure. But illustrious, like the sun in decline; so, like him at that moment, she appeared to occupy a still greater space. The fact is, the public were unwilling to confess they had been deceived; and with the obstinacy of "Murphy's" disciples, yet took their cue from the Wilson almanack. Miss Wilson next attempted *Clara*, in the "Duenna;" but the luminary was still sinking, and, fierce and fiery as had been her sudden fame, in the words of her only successful opera, it had now become but, "mild as the moonbeam."

Miss Wilson received no less than 1218*l.* by her experiment, having sang on fifty-eight occasions. This lady was born in April, 1803, and was married to her instructor, Mr. Welsh, June, 1827.

In February, an injunction was obtained in the Court of Chancery, against Mr. Glossop, the proprietor of the Coburg Theatre, for acting "Therese," a melo-drame which Elliston had recently brought out with considerable applause. This injunction was, however, discharged, for some informality; but a few days afterwards, a quarrel taking place between Glossop and Moncrief, the latter was induced to tender his services to Elliston, by letting him into a little secret—namely, that Glossop and one Meddox had actually copied the piece, "Therese," during the time of its representation, from the pit of Drury Lane, having a scene-painter also with them, to take notes for his department, and rendering the piracy complete; the anecdote itself being disclosed by the recent ally of Glossop, makes the tissue unique.

The following is a deposition of Mr. Cooper:—

"SIR,—You will have the kindness to insert the following in your paper of to morrow, in the matter 'Elliston *versus* Jones and others,' heard before the Lord Chancellor. Mr. Meddox affirms he merely went into Drury Lane Theatre to take notes, on the first night of the drama of 'Therese.' I shall feel indebted if you will lay before the public the substance of my affidavits. On Friday, February 2nd, I paid for admission, half-play, to the pit of the above theatre; at the end of the 'Dramatist,' during

the overture to 'Therese,' I perceived two persons on my left side, front seat of the pit, each preparing for action—not of hostility, but union—cutting pencil, preparing paper, &c. The moment the piece commenced, the writing of each was rapid, vivid, and earnest—noting every scene, change, or incident that took place; each selecting, while two or more persons were on the stage, an alternate sentence or speech to note down. I will distinctly state, to the best of my knowledge and belief, Messrs. Meddox and Glossop were not only merely taking notes, but a literal copy of the then acting drama of 'Therese;' noting down even to the entry of four servants, which I heard Meddox loudly say to Glossop, 'enter four servants,' and at various periods of the performance acting in concert together, and, at the end of every act, comparing notes.

"Now, sir, as it might be presumed I have had interested motives in stating my knowledge of the above facts, I shall only observe, I have had no communication with Mr. Elliston in the business. I apprised Mr. Glossop of what I was noticing, and casually mentioned the affair to a gentleman of considerable talent, late of the Coburg Theatre; having no other feeling in the matter, but that every labourer in the cause of literature and the drama, should be protected against aggression and piracy. I am, sir, your humble servant,

" J. COOPER.

" 2, Whitefriars, March 2nd, 1821."

We will now offer another example of those delicate attempts at extortion, to which no persons are more liable than managers of theatres. It is a letter from an amiable unknown—one doing good by stealth; or, in other words, stealing all the good for himself, that he can lay his hands on.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I have long admired you, and sincerely wish you well. I therefore send you this caution, to beg and advise that the public prints of the metropolis be *encouraged* to speak well of the performances of your theatre,—I mean, by paying them some little more court than may at present be thought necessary by you. It is with much pain I read the comments in that cursed paper, the ministerial ‘John Bull,’ against old Drury. Pray hush the editors, if possible, by a present, which you know may be reasonably excused by the old adage, ‘That ’tis necessary at times to hold a candle to the devil.’

“ I do not generally approve of my present kind of communication; yet I think circumstances (as in this case) may plead its excuse at times, particularly when ’tis to give friendly hints, which, if communicated in another way, might not perhaps be acceptable, even from an old acquaintance.

“ With every kind regard for your welfare,

“ I am, dear sir, sincerely yours

“ P.S.—Perhaps you will leave a note at the stage-door of Drury, addressed to A. B., *expressing your thanks* for this advice The papers I allude to are more read in fashionable life than you are aware of.

“ 27th February, 1821.”

“ On the 6th of February (1821), his Majesty George IV. made his first state visit to Drury Lane Theatre, the performances being “ Artaxerxes,” with Mr. Poole’s farce, “ Who’s who.” The king was accompanied by his royal brothers, the Dukes of York and Clarence; and nothing was wanting on the part of the management to render the entertainment worthy such illustrious patronage. The king was punctual to the time—a quarter before seven o’clock; but a considerable time afterwards elapsed before he thought proper to enter his box. This was the first occasion of his appearing in public since his accession, and the uncertain manner of his reception, was evidently a question of some disquiet to his Majesty.

The pause which the king had occasioned, was evidently embarrassing to his whole suite, of which his Majesty appeared suddenly to become conscious; when, with a movement, almost partaking of a rush, he advanced to the front of the royal box. In a moment all doubt was at an end. The king’s reception was enthusiastic and general. The night passed off with the greatest *éclat*, and the few gra-

cious words his Majesty vouchsafed to the manager, lost nothing in their value with him, to whom they were addressed. The king, in descending, made some allusion to his sly enemy, the gout. "I have it myself, your Majesty," responded the manager, with precipitation; a question in which the king was, without doubt, greatly interested.

Elliston, had in anger, dismissed a certain lady from his establishment at a moment's notice, for some fancied or real cause; but of no matter here—a handsome, attractive woman, who, on that account alone, in Drury Lane Theatre, had many advocates on this abrupt usage. On the following morning, there was a rehearsal at the theatre, and Elliston proceeded to the Duke of Bedford's box to witness one of the scenes then in progress on the stage. The interior of the building, during the morning, as every one may guess, exhibits but a dim *religious* light, and, to persons unacquainted with playhouse intricacies, positively dark and dangerous. Elliston having witnessed the scene he came purposely to observe, turned now about, and, by the religious light we have just mentioned, traced the form of a solitary nun, recumbent on a side ottoman, to whom his devout spirit would have acted as a ready confessor. "The mask of night was on her face," and he could not discover her features; but her form was palpable, and that lovely.

The holy friar, intent on the spiritual welfare of the lone stranger, soon began to unfold himself; and, meeting with a very frank response to the pressure of his hand, he improved the moments with that singular *savoir* which long habitude and natural temperament had made so thoroughly his own. The confidence reposed by the shriven fair, we do not pretend to guess at, but our "Father Lawrence" had no sooner exclaimed, "What, my angel, can I do for you?" than the lady promptly replied, "Restore me in the theatre; refund my fine, and raise my salary." It is needless to say, the fair *Ursuline* turned out to be the very lady who had lately been angrily discharged; and it is only in justice to Elliston to declare that he acted as a man of honour.

But if Elliston's *tendresse* was fervent as the sun, it was equally impartial; and far more godlike than the passion of your poor pitiful fellows who devote their hearts and lives to one only being. He had a soul far above constancy to a single object, which would only make the many envious and the one ungrateful :—

"If she be a virgin of modest
 Eye, shame-faced, temp'rate aspect, her very
 Modesty inflames me, her sober blushes
 Fire me: if I behold a wanton, pretty,
 Courtly, petulant, apt, I am extremely
 In love with her, because she is not clownishly rude;

And that she assures her lover of no
 Ignorant, dull moving *Venus* ; be she
 Sourly severe, I think she wittily counterfeits ;
 And I love her for her wit : if she be
 Learned, and censures poets, I love her soul ;
 And for her soul, her body : be she a
 Lady of profess'd ignorance, oh, I am
 Infinitely taken with her simplicity ;
 I'm assured to find no sophistication
 About her !—be she slender and lean, she's
 The *Greek's* delight : be she round and plump, she's
 Th' *Italian's* pleasure : if she be tall, she's
 Of a goodly form : if she be
 Short and low, she's nimbly delightful,
 And ordinarily quick-witted : be she young,
 She's for mine eye : be she old, she's for my
 Discourse, as one well knowing there is much
 Amiableness in a grave matron. But be
 She young, or old, lean, fat, short, tall, white, red,
 Brown, nay, even black, my discourse shall find
 Reason to love her."

On the 31st of March, Mrs. Elliston had retired to rest at an early hour ; at about midnight she was suddenly seized by a spasmodic attack, and expired within a quarter of an hour afterwards. A messenger was immediately despatched to Warwick, where Elliston was waiting the result of a trial of trespass, in which he was defendant ; arising from the projection of the portico to his new building in Leamington. He immediately set out for London.

The occasional tribute of respect which we have paid to this lady, in the course of these Memoirs, (for there was no action that she performed that was not entitled to respect,) we feel will still fall short

of her claims on the memory of her numerous friends, as a wife, a mother, and a member of social life. Towards her husband, Mrs. Elliston felt and cherished a conjugal affection of the most intrinsic kind. She was a wife jealous of her husband's honour, anxious for his solid happiness, watchful of his estate ; and, with a submissive temper, she possessed all the ability to direct. Her manners and her person were graceful ; she had moral, if not intellectual, accomplishments ; and her gentleness of disposition gave the last charm to her social character.

As a professor of her art, Mrs. Elliston was highly respected and patronised, whose example in all departments of life, has since been so amiably studied in her surviving daughter, Mrs. Wilson.

On the 6th of April, the remains of Mrs. Elliston were deposited in St. George's burial-ground, Bayswater. She was forty-six years of age.

On the day of her funeral a knell was tolled in the Abbey Church, Bath, in which city her memory was highly respected, and a similar tribute of respect was paid to her name in the parish of Leamington.

A few days after the funeral, the following, written on a deep mourning sheet, was addressed to the widower :—

‘ Do not understand by this letter, that “ Invisiblina ’ is one at all inclined to fall into the ranks of

your numerous correspondents, who may be now presenting you with condolences at the loss of your best friend—your inestimable wife. Sentiment, cast into the mould of form or etiquette, not only loses its natural beauty, but puts on a most repulsive aspect. Such will be, doubtless, the character of many epistles you will receive from interested and time-serving mourners, who seize the occasion of your affliction, to make better progress into your confidence and favour. The friend you have lost, you can never hope to supply. It is enough : I will not wring tears from your eyes by recounting her virtues ; but I would rather wake the sterner part of your nature, and implore you, by the conviction you must have, that you did not sufficiently value her when living, you will imitate the example she has bequeathed to you. What is now due from you to your family, your friends and society, is a very heavy debt, because you well know, hitherto, how small a part you have borne in these obligations. In all these instances, *she* herself has paid the demands in full, leaving you to the pleasanter paths (as they are sometimes called) of life ; so that by her death obligations have fallen on you, which, if you neglect, will some day be the bitterest pang mortal heart can suffer.

“ Honour her, you can now, but one way ; and that is, by honouring her example :

“ A prudence undeceiving, undeceived,
 That not too little nor too much believed—
 That scorn'd unjust suspicion's coward fear,
 And without weakness, knew to be sincere.
 For such she was—when in her fairest days,
 Amidst th' acclaim of universal praise,
 In life's and glory's freshest bloom,
 Death came remorseless on, and bound her in the tomb.

Elliston receives the following communication from Mr. Frederick Reynolds ; but the proposal therein contained, does not appear, in this instance, to have been accepted by the manager :—

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I have finished a new play; you will say, ‘What then?’—Why then, to prevent any misunderstanding between us as to terms, I will fairly state them—if you have confidence in me, you will probably agree to them—if you have not, you will decline them and the play, and say, ‘ This is a Covent Garden *spoil'd child!*’ Well ! we shall still part friends.

“ I propose, as some remuneration for the length of time I have devoted (and as a sort of *retaining fee*), to receive, on putting the MS. into your hands, 100*l.*; another 100*l.* on the 6th and on the 9th nights ; and 50*l.* on the 15th and 25th nights ; making, if the play run 25 nights, 400*l.*

“As to the play, it is *partly* taken from a popular event in English history : there is an old obsolete drama on the subject, which has vanished from the

stage nearly half a century, and from which I have deriv'd very little advantage. I do not mean to say that I have not followed '*my custom in the afternoon,*' and benefited by other old forgotten plays; but these classical resuscitations, as you know, always heighten and embellish a modern play.

" My principal character is for Mr. Kean; but there are, I hope, three other prominent parts, for Mr. Cooper, Mr. Harley, and Madame Vestris; there is likewise a comic old man, and a character for your principal female singer; also duets, glees, choruses, and spectacle; in short, I trust it is not a *thin* gentleman, but *fat* enough to satisfy the cormorants.

" I have only to add, if you agree to this arrangement, I shall be happy any morning to deliver the play to you, and to tell you how sincerely I shall wish success to that, and all other Drury Lane novelties. I am, my dear sir,

" Very sincerely yours,

P. Reynolds.

" R. W. Elliston, Esq., &c. &c.
Warren Street, Thursday, August 22nd."

On Saturday the 21st of April, Lord Byron's tragedy, "*Marino Faliero*," was published by Murray, in

Albemarle Street, and on Wednesday the 25th, the play was represented by Elliston, in Drury Lane. This extraordinary march, so worthy of our dramatic Napoleon, was thus accomplished. The drama, sheet by sheet, from the compositors' hands, was brought from the printing-office to the theatre, and the whole play, in fact, studied before publication.

On Wednesday (the day of representation), the formal licence came from the chamberlain's-office—so far, so good—but within half an hour afterwards, a notice reached Elliston from the publisher's solicitor, announcing that the lord chancellor had, on application, granted an injunction against the acting of "Marino Faliero," and that the play must be immediately withdrawn.*

Elliston was now in his element—namely, a perplexity; and, with his wonted activity in such cases, he sprang into a hackney-coach with the view of driving to Hamilton Place, that he might see Lord Eldon himself on the subject. The tardiness of the driver, however—"So tortoise paced to his fleet desires," ill suited his impatience. Out again of the vehicle he jumped, making far better way on foot to his lordship's residence. He was there informed that

* Lord Byron was at this time in Italy. In his preface to "Marino Faliero," the author disavows any intention of the stage, either in respect of this play, or any future dramatic production of his pen.

the chancellor was in his private room at Lincoln's Inn. To Lincoln's Inn, therefore, Elliston at once proceeded, where, on arriving, he learned the chancellor had just departed. Again was the manager on his return to Hamilton Place, where he arrived in very time to catch his lordship by the skirts of his clothing, as he was mounting the steps of his own door. Here the defendant at once entered on the merits of his case, and his lordship declared the court sitting—Lord Eldon on the upper step, and Elliston on the pavement—the one all patience, the other all animation. The chancellor hesitated as to his previous order—Lord Eldon doubted—and Elliston redoubled the force of his argument. At length, he so far succeeded, that the judge suspended the injunction granted against the acting of the play for that night ; but “ Mind,” observed he, “ you appear before me in the morning of to-morrow.” The manager, hereupon, took his respectful leave, quitting the chancellor, after an interview more extraordinary than any, perhaps, recorded in Mr. Twiss's admirable life of his lordship.

This sudden new position of the question met with but little credit in the councils of Albemarle Street, and the following hand-bill was consequently in immediate circulation :—

“ The Public are respectfully informed that the

representation of Lord Byron's Tragedy, 'The Doge of Venice,' (Marino Faliero) this evening takes place, in defiance of an injunction of the lord chancellor, which was not applied for until the remonstrance of the publisher, at the earnest desire of the noble author, had failed in protecting this drama from its intrusion on the stage, for which it was never intended."

The play was acted on the night in question, and so far a triumph had been obtained; but it was one dearly bought, or perhaps scarcely worth purchasing at all. The drama was neither fitted for the stage, nor was any defection of this kind at all supplied by good acting. No public excitement took place, in consequence either of the author's name or the circumstances of its announcement; and the receipts, at first price, amounted to only 147*l*. The play-bills, however, of the following day, gave a far different account, stating also, that "on grounds which remained to be explained, certain persons had thought fit to obtain an injunction in Chancery against the representation of the play, to the prejudice of the interests of the theatre and the gratification of the public."

Several hearings now took place before the chancellor, and it was settled that the case should be sent to the Court of King's Bench, to see whether an action could be maintained. The argument was to come on in the November following, when no

counsel appearing on the part of the plaintiff, the case was struck out. “ Marino Faliero ” was acted a second time on the 30th of April, under the authority of the lord chancellor, to which all parties had assented. The play was represented, on the whole, seven times, the greatest receipt being 160*l*.

Having stated the critique at the head of the *play-bills*; a tactical assumption, first adopted by Robert William Elliston, we are bound to insert some account from the public press. We give an extract from the *Times*:—

“ We have said that Lord Byron’s *tragedy* was performed ; but we ought rather to have stated that fragments, violently torn from that noble work, were presented to the audience. * * * * *

We pretend not to give any opinion on the question at issue between the publisher and the proprietors of Drury Lane ; that will be decided, and justly, we doubt not, elsewhere. But there are two other questions on which every honourable and feeling mind may fairly offer an opinion :—First, if an author in his preface expressly declares, not only that he writes not for the stage, but that he has long and anxiously avoided writing for it (no matter what his reason) can any individual under such circumstances, consistently with the respect due from man to man, bring forward on the stage that which was never meant to excite the applause, or to brave the censure of an audience ? And next, if the

wholesale invasion of private property and private feeling be allowed, what must we think of those who employ their literary butchers to mangle and mutilate (as in this instance they have mangled and mutilated) that which they have had the hardihood to make their prize? Procrustes-like, they have irreverently lopped and disfigured the body of the 'Doge of Venice,' to fit him to his narrow bed of torture at Drury Lane. * * *

"The piece was coldly received, let *the play-bills* say what they choose."

Elliston having imagined that Mr. Douglas Kinnaird had been partly instrumental in the opposition made to the production of "Marino Faliero" at Drury Lane, the latter addresses the manager as follows :

"DEAR SIR,—As I am uncertain whether I correctly discriminated between the serious and the jocular parts of our conversation last night, I think it right to prevent any possible misconception on your part, and to recal to your recollection the erroneous impressions under which you appeared to me, from my apprehension of your conversation, to labour ; and to repeat formally my correction of them, as far as they regarded myself. I understood you to state your belief that I had interfered on the subject of Lord Byron's tragedy in a manner inimical to your interests, and to that of Drury Lane

Theatre. How utterly opposed to the fact this is, will best appear from the following concise statement of all that I have ever known or done in the matter :—

“ As soon as it was publicly known that Lord Byron had written (but had not then transmitted) his tragedy, I did, at your request, make application to Mr. Murray, in the event of his being the publisher, to give you the preference, and I communicated to him your very liberal offer to let him fix his price. To this offer I added such other inducements, arising out of Lord B.’s former connexion with Drury Lane Theatre, as I thought would have weight with Mr. Murray, and such as I fancied would influence Lord Byron himself. Soon after this, the MSS. arrived—I read it, and was decidedly of opinion it was unfit for successful representation. I told you so ; and, if I mistake not, I added, at the same time, that Mr. Hobhouse’s impression was different. From that hour, to the day before yesterday, I have no recollection of being ever spoken to, or even heard the subject of the representation of the play mentioned by any person whatever. From Lord Byron’s letters to myself and to Mr. Murray, I knew that Mr. Murray *could not* be a party to its being acted, and I was so satisfied of the unfitness of the play for representation that it was with the utmost surprise I learnt, for the first time, its having been announced by you, by Mr. Murray’s

bringing to me your play-bill *the day before yesterday*, when he came to obtain my signature, as Lord Byron's representative to the deed of assignment of the copyright to him. As to its being about to be acted at Covent Garden Theatre, I learnt that fact, for the first time, last night behind your scenes.

With regard to the injunction, Mr. Murray told me, the day before yesterday, at the meeting above alluded to, that he was about to apply for it. I treated the matter with indifference, expressing my confidence that the chancellor could not grant it—and I considered he was so acting, rather to discharge his duty to Lord Byron than with any hope of succeeding. Yester afternoon, at six o'clock, he announced to me the having obtained the injunction; but that you would certainly proceed with the play. I then concurred entirely in his suggestion, that a public protest should be *immediately* made on the behalf of the author, before the experiment of acting his play was made, as after its failure such a protest would come with an ill grace. But I decidedly disapprove, and never contemplated Mr. Murray's sending hand-bills into the theatre. This is all I know of the matter. Judge, then, of my surprise to find, on coming to the theatre last night, an impression that I had been acting hostilely to the interests of the theatre, secretly too, and that in favour of Covent Garden Theatre. Whence it arose I am utterly at a loss to guess. It

could not have arisen solely from a conversation which you mentioned having passed, some weeks since, when it would seem I had jokingly said to you that the play would be acted at Covent Garden Theatre: and that you replied by asking me if I would fight. I have no recollection whatever of this conversation; but I do not charge my memory with all my bad jokes—that certainly was one. As it is possible you may have communicated to others the impression with which you favoured me, last night, I shall feel obliged, and you will, no doubt, feel it right, to communicate this letter in the same quarters—I mean particularly to Mr. Calcraft, to Mr. G. Robins, and to Mr. Geo. Lamb—but not to Mr. Russell, your stage-manager, whose manner of addressing me, last night, does not make me otherwise than careless of his impressions. I do not at all comprehend on what ground the injunction can be sustained, without the principle being carried a great deal further than is consistent with the habits and opinions of the world at this period.

“ Believe me, dear sir, with every sincere wish for the success of yourself and theatre,

“ Yours truly,

Dryden Hoivaid

The remains of Mrs. Elliston, as we have observed, were deposited in the burial-ground of St. George's in the Bayswater Road, on the 6th of April.

Early in May an anonymous communication was forwarded to Elliston, stating that the body of his late wife had been feloniously disinterred, and was then missing, and earnestly called on him to give immediate information of the matter to the parish authorities. Elliston, in great agitation of mind, proceeded to the vestry of St. George's, and laid this account before proper officers. Within a short time, however, the statement was discovered to be a malicious, low-lived hoax ; no disturbance of the body, nor any attempt on the grave, having taken place.

CHAPTER X.

The King at Drury Lane Theatre—A singular author—Specimen of his drama—A masque festival—The result—A battle royal—A laconic note—Mr. Mackay—Sir Walter Scott—His letter to Mrs. Coutts—"His Majesty's Servants"—The King's Coronation—A cat and kittens—Elliston's inconsistencies—Edmund Kean—A special triumph—Drury Lane in an uproar—Letter from Kean to a Lady—Observations thereon—Elliston's Coronation—Inflation of the Great Lessee—Death of Queen Caroline—Elliston a regicide—A tradesman's letter—"Invisibline"—"Wild Oats"—Shifts of strollers—Colman and Elliston.

ON the 9th of May his Majesty made his second state visit to Drury Lane Theatre, and, on the 14th, Caroline, his Queen, attended by Lord Hood and two ladies, honoured the establishment by their presence. By her Majesty's desire, a box was prepared for her, immediately *opposite* the King's. Soon after the Queen's arrival, a cry for "God save the King," was raised, which the orchestra failing to obey, Mr. Wallack was assailed by missiles, in an interesting variety of form. Elliston, at length presented himself.

"I am arrived!" said he; "speak—what is your wish?" (Cries of "The Queen! the Queen!")

"Ay!" responded the manager, with a most

comic look of unmeaningness ; “ What, my good friends, am I to understand by ‘ the Queen ? ’ ”

“ The National Anthem, God save the King !—Queen ! ”

“ Intelligible, though conflicting,” observed our hero, half aside. “ You shall be obeyed.”

Accordingly, on the fall of the curtain for the play, the company of actors—part in their costume of the tragedy, “ Marino Faliero,” and part prepared for “ Giovanni in London,” a mixture of Demons and Doges, Vixens and Venetians, made their appearance. Disassociated as were the characters, the Anthem was equally discordant, and, after considerable uproar, which the greater part of the auditory appeared especially to enjoy, the Queen retired and peace was restored.

Amongst many curious epistolary communications, which, from time to time, were made to Drury Lane Theatre, under Elliston’s lesseeship, the following was addressed to his stage-manager, Russell :—

“ DEAR SIR,—I hope you will excuse me for thus intruding upon your notice. You must know, sir, that I am a young author (or, at least, a pretender), and have composed a melodrama ; and, although late in the season, I should be obliged to you if you would (if it is worth it) have it performed at the

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. The following is an extract from it. (We give it literally :—)

* * * * “ Yes, 'tis I have murdered her !
 Then what am I now ?—An horrid mixture
 Of the crimes of man ! A monster, blacker
 In guilt, than any that hell holds ! Why then
 This stay—I'll plunge into the infernal
 Streams of burning *Acheron* ! Give me the
 Angels clarion ! Let me awake the dead !
 But see the black *Cocytus* in smoky
 Circles, rolls its fiery waves ! Hark !—hear,
 The dreadful harmonies of woe ! Deep groans !
 Rattling chains ! All !—all ! Will not it die
 Away ? Ah, no, the din increases round !
 Ten thousand clanks, in dismal notes, clash mirthful !
 Roaring bursts of sighs and groans, strike horror
 To my soul ! But, lo ! the infernal hags
 Rush forth, and drag me before their master,
 Whose heads bedeck'd with fiery serpents ;
 Curling around him in deep horrid wreaths !
 His eyes flaming as ten thousand fires ! and
 His body black as night !

“ I have selected this speech, because it is the only one writ in blank verse. My friends say it is a beautiful piece, especially when my age is considered (18). If, therefore, sir, you think, by the above speech, that the piece is worthy of being performed, I will send it to you. As I do not want to be known as yet, I should be obliged to you if you will get the piece performed for me. If you will simply state in the *Morning Advertiser* (as I see no other paper), that ‘ H. H. is requested to bring his

piece to Mr. R. on —— ' (naming the time); or by saying so in the bills of the performance.

" Mr. Elliston has said (I believe) that ' his theatre should always be open to young beginners,' (or something to that purport.) Shew your esteem, then, for young beginners, by giving me an answer, and by encouraging me, as it will reflect both honour on yourself and

" Your humble servant, H. HUNTER.

" As soon as possible, as the season draws to an end."

On the 18th of June, a masque festival was given at Drury Lane Theatre, in commemoration of the Battle of Waterloo—one of the most striking and dashing efforts of its kind ever undertaken. The walls of this vast stage were not concealed by a heterogeneous mass of scenery, ill sorted as the choristers of the 14th, but the preparations were unique and specially appropriated to this occasion.

A false ceiling was constructed, beautifully painted by Marinari—transparencies, admirably executed, being portraits of his Majesty, the Dukes of York, Wellington, and the foreign heroes, who had been distinguished in the common cause on the plains of the Netherlands. A moveable orchestra divided the stage from the audience part of the theatre; the entertainments commencing by a grand martial

concert, assisted by Ambrogetti. A brief *vaudeville* followed; at the conclusion of which the barrier was removed and Chalon's "Magic Recreative Philosophy" was exhibited. The "French Hercules," Grey's Fantoccini, the Polanders, &c. &c., came duly on, in turn. The Champion, in complete steel, attended by two heralds, in their tabards, mounted on chargers, and richly caparisoned; two knights in magnificent armour, accompanied by a band of king's trumpeters, passed through a triumphal arch—a fac-simile of the one at that time in progress at Westminster Hall.

The *fête* was crowned with success, so far as the public were concerned. The only one who did not reap his full reward was the enterprising manager himself, yet his spirits and manner indicated no less than a triumph. The expenses and receipts attending this undertaking were about equal—neither profit nor reward fell to the share of Elliston, who, under similar or more distressing circumstances, always appeared to have put a certain bean into his mouth, which old travellers speak of as growing in Turkey, which being sucked has the quality of purging the memory from all disagreeable reflections.

A few days after this merry meeting, the messenger of the theatre announced to Elliston that

two gentlemen were waiting for him in his private room. The manager immediately obeyed the summons, and, within a few minutes, the housekeeper, with looks of terror, rushed upon the stage, and, in piercing accents, cried out that a couple of ruffians were murdering her master. The actors on the stage, well knowing that this thrilling effect was not just the one looked for, in the piece under rehearsal, were naturally alarmed, and, on some of them reaching Elliston's room, Mr. Rodwell, the proprietor of the Adelphi Theatre, was observed bleeding profusely from the forehead, but Elliston apparently unhurt. One O'Callagan, an Adelphi actor, well fitted to challenge Mount Athos to combat, was also by, and, with all the characteristic clearness of his country, exclaimed—

“Oh, yes—here we are—and sure we came o'purpose—and you've done it well, Mr. Rodwell, though you've a little scratch over the sconce, I'm thinking.”

It turned out that on Elliston entering the room, Rodwell inquired whether a note, he then held in his hand, was the manager's writing, and, on Elliston's assenting, the intruder struck him across the shoulders with a whip, which he had brought, according to the Irishman, “for the purpose.” *Ranger*,—“Tam Mercurio, tam Marti—fun or fighting all the same to him,”—was not tardy in similar language, and, with the prompt im-

pingement of his "night preserver," levelled his antagonist to the earth. O'Callagan, a *corps de reserve*, on the part of the Adelphi invader, now interfered, but Elliston still continued cock of the walk ; and such was the picture when the terrified rehearsallists entered. The facetious Tom Brown has said, " that a woman who vows she'll cry out, and a man who threatens to cut your throat, will neither of them be as good as their words." The latter portion was certainly proved in this case, for Elliston paid two cuts for one ; as to the former, we can offer no opinion on the matter.

The history of the above *fracas* appears to have been this. Elliston wishing to engage Chalons for his grand masque *fête*, had gone, with that intent, behind the scenes of the Adelphi Theatre, of which Rodwell was proprietor. On the following morning, the Adelphi manager forwarded a remonstrance to the " Great Lessee"—a remonstrance, more in the rough tones of Ajax, than the mild accents of Ulysses.

To this Elliston replied :—

" RODWELL,—I have heard of a puddle in a storm, and a puppy in a passion ; at the one I am unmoved, but at the other, I laugh outright.

" R. W. ELLISTON."

At the July Westminster sessions, the Adelphi defendants, Rodwell and the redoubtable O'Callagan, pleaded guilty. By the advice of Alley, their counsel, they apologized to the court for their rupture on the public peace, and Rodwell making an overture of 20*l.* to the common cause of the Drury Lane and Covent Garden Funds, the same was accepted—and each and every party returned to give his own version, publicly, of the story.

“ Thus often at the ‘ Temple Stairs,’ we’ve seen
Two Tritons of a rough athletic mien,
Stoutly, dispute some quarrel of the flood,
With knuckles bruis’d, and face besmear’d with blood ;
But at the first appearance of a Fare,
Both quit the fray, and to their oars repair.”

Mr. Mackay, an actor of considerable northern celebrity, and who, in his own city of Edinburgh, like Blissett in Bath, had been for many years a reigning favourite, arrived about this time in London, bringing with him letters of recommendation from Sir Walter Scott.

Mackay's line was low comedy, and his foremost impersonation *Baillie Nicol Jarvie*, in Scott's dramatized novel, “ Rob Roy.” This entertainment being advertised for Cooper's benefit in July, Mackay made his first London appearance, in his leading character, and on which occasion was received with much good feeling. Mackay thrice repeated the part, and for his second character

selected *Dominie Sampson*, in which he had acquired almost an equal fame amongst his countrymen, as in the *Baillie*.

If Mr. Mackay did not produce that great sensation which his friends had anticipated, he had, perhaps, the more elevating gratification of knowing that, though he could not command success, he had at least deserved it; for there is no doubt that many points of nationality in his acting, were lost on the perceptions of his southern auditory, who, having been accustomed to see their own Liston, in the identical characters, would fain persuade themselves he was the better delineator, because he had caused them, perhaps, to laugh more heartily. Certain it is, the Mackay shoot did not flourish on the Drury stock; the actor, like his native whisky, though warm and winning, taste it where you may, yet was far more relished and understood on its own soil. The *Mackay*, "neat as imported," did not command a sale, while the *Liston*, prepared for the English market, was again in demand. Mackay afterwards played *Storm*, in "Ella Rosenberg;" this was, beyond all doubt, a failure.

The annexed is from Sir Walter Scott, addressed to Mrs. Coutts, and thence forwarded to Elliston:—

"MY DEAR MRS. COUTTS,—As you are kind enough to allow me the interest of a cousin, will

you permit me to beg you will countenance with your presence and Mr. Coutts', the performance of a Scots actor, named Mackay, who goes up to perform the part of *Baillie Nicol Jarvie*, in the play of 'Rob Roy.' He has drawn most amazing audiences here, and continues to attract houses whenever he performs the part, which, indeed, is one of the very best personifications of national character (Irish Johnstone not excepted) which I ever saw on any stage. I fear, indeed, the English may not think it so broadly ludicrous as Liston's playing, and I hope a good number of Scotch folk will attend, as they must be (at first at least) the more competent judges of the nice and well-drawn shades of their own provincial peculiarities. I think you, who understand such subjects so perfectly well, will not fail to relish Mackay's performance; and I intreat your interest with my distinguished countryman, Lord Erskine. I am spending two or three days here with the Lord Chief Commissioner and Lord Chief Baron, well known to his lordship as William Adam and Sir Samuel Shepherd, who send their respects. I beg my own respectful compliments to Mr. Coutts, and am, with great regard, dear madam,

"Your most respectful, humble servant,

"WALTER SCOTT.

"Blair Adam, 11th June, 1821."

London was now in a state of excitement at the approaching ceremony of the coronation of George IV., and, in respect of which, Elliston had projects of his own, not unworthy the self-same page of history. The Drury Lane company still retained their designation, “ his Majesty’s Servants,” under which holding, Elliston was now desirous they should be recognised, as formerly, and occupy their station at the ensuing pageant. Every exertion was made to this end, and not without hopes of success, but the privilege having so long been in abeyance, the scheme was finally defeated.

Pending the above deliberation, Elliston received the following announcement :—

“ House of Commons, 13 June, 1821.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—The mode by which you must make your claim is by memorial, addressed to ‘ the Right Honourable and Honourable the Commissioners of the Court of Claims ;’ in which memorial it will be necessary that you should state the nature of the claim; this memorial the parties making the claim must attend with, on any day the court sits at the House of Lords, and be prepared with all the evidence they are able to obtain upon the subject, as they will be probably immediately called in to substantiate it. We have no records at the House of Commons to which I can refer for information, otherwise I would most cheerfully do it. I think

if you could, by any means, get access to the records of the proceedings of the several coronations since the reign of Queen Elizabeth, you would probably be able to make out your claim; at all events, it will be worth while to make it, even though the success might be doubtful. With respect to your polite offer for Thursday night, I fear my business at the House of Commons will prevent me the pleasure of availing myself of it. I am, my dear sir,

“ Always yours, JOHN BULL.”

As his actors were not permitted to play their parts in the out-door drama of the King's coronation, Elliston was determined to bring the coronation itself within his own edifice, and with his accustomed alacrity, set immediately to work on this fresh speculation.

Application he now made to Lord Gwydyr, Sir George Nayler, Mr. Woods, and other gentlemen especially concerned in the arrangements; all of whom very handsomely conceded every facility to Elliston and his artists, by giving them free access, day after day, to all the preparations, and allowing drawings and models to be taken at the will of the parties.

Of these privileges Elliston personally and unremittingly availed himself; and it was in the course of these “ notes of preparation ” that the first indication of that amusing idiosyncrasy was de-

veloped, which, in the after-stages of the theatrical pageant, gave rise to so many anecdotes respecting him. Daily interested in all that was in forwardness for the inauguration of "King George upon the throne," and pleased with cajoling his own imagination, he became, at length, a firm believer in the story he had so often repeated to his own ears ; more firmly accrediting himself a king than many real monarchs have absolutely found themselves. In fact, he began to look not only on the Drury preparations as movements in his individual glorification, but all that was going on at Westminster also ; so that his senses positively reeled under the weight of this potent sirup. To those who assert the universe to be but illusion, this was enough ; so that our friend was not only king in his own conceit, but a monarch good as the best, in the opinion of a very profound body of philosophers.

A moral rebuke, quite worthy a place amongst the myths of ancient sages, transpired just at this moment. Amongst other things to which Elliston was permitted access, was an inspection of the coronation robes, which were at this time deposited at the house of Mr. Myers, in Conduit Street. The king's grand robe was spread out on the floor of Mr. M.'s drawing-room, which had been prepared for the purpose, to the full extent of twenty-five feet. Elliston was ushered up stairs for the inspection by the master of the house, when, on

entering the apartment, they were horror-struck on discovering a cat giving nourishment to a recent brood of kittens, bound in one family embrace, and reposing on the downy selvage of the robe of royalty, valued at six thousand guineas. A lesson to human vanity, without doubt; but in this instance completely lost in the dismay and apprehensions of the whole party assembled.

But now we arrive at a piece of inconsistency which will be scarcely credited. The king's coronation took place, as we know, on the 19th; tickets having been furnished to Elliston for the Hall, the Abbey, and all objects of interesting inquiry. On the day after this brilliant event, Braham entered Drury Lane Theatre, where, meeting with the "Great Lessee," he asked, which newspaper account might be deemed the most correct history of all the fine doings of the previous day.

"I have seen no paper," replied Elliston, with a mysterious, or rather wool-gathering aspect.

"Well! what of the proceedings at the Abbey? You have made your minutes?"

"I was not in the Abbey."

"Indeed! The ceremony in the Hall, then?"

"I was not there."

"Neither the Abbey nor the Hall?" repeated Braham, with evident surprise. "You gave your whole attention, then, to the procession?"

“ I did not see the procession,” answered Elliston, in a measured tone, as though he were uttering the profoundest sentiment of Locke himself. “ I had some important business at Walworth,” added he, in a tremulous whisper.

“ Walworth !” responded some half dozen persons with unfeigned astonishment—“ business at Walworth !”

The fact is, such had been the unpardonable levity or indiscretion of Elliston, that after all the bustle and commotion, of which we have spoken, every chance had been thrown away of doing anything in the matter. Elliston had been indulging one of his truant fancies, and had absolutely seen nothing. The project of the coronation at Drury Lane was now given up, and all the workmen about to be dismissed, when a letter arrived from Kean, dated—

“ Liverpool, Coronation day.

“ MY DEAR ELLISTON,—With those feelings which an Englishman can alone understand, I have touched once again my native land. I shall be at the stage-door of Drury at noon, on Monday next. Do you think a few nights now would be of advantage to you ? I am full of health and ambition, both of which are at your service, or they will run riot.

“ E. KEAN.”

This letter was “ favoured by a friend,” who, on

delivering it to Elliston, suggested to him that it might be gratifying to Kean, at this period of pageants, if his entrance into London were marked by some token of professional respect, which might also be highly advantageous to the interests of Drury Lane.

Elliston was not slow in taking this hint. Playbills of an enormous size were, 'in a few hours, posted over London, announcing Kean's return from America, and his re-appearance on the ensuing Monday, as *Richard III.* An impetus being thus given to the truant and slumbering spirit of the manager, Elliston, on the same sheet, advertised his "Magnificent representation of the Coronation," which only the day before had been positively abandoned.

On the Monday, at about noon, a special courier announced the progress of Kean towards the door of Drury Lane, and within a quarter of an hour the cavalcade was in sight. Six outriders, in a medley costume of all nations of the earth that do not go absolutely tattooed, constituted the vanguard; then came Elliston himself in solitary grandeur in his own carriage, drawn by four greys. The hero of the triumph next—Kean himself, likewise in his own carriage, supported by Russell and Hughes in cocked hats, drawn by four blacks. John Cooper, in the simple majesty of his undecorated form, followed, drawn also by four skewbald

or piebald. A troop of horsemen formed the flank, composed of bruisers, jockeys, tavern-keepers, dog-fighters, and other friends of the drama; and the whole was brought up by the heterogeneous rabble which the progressive affair had, from pillar to post, enlisted in its service. *Alexander* alighted from his car at the ostiary of Drury Lane Theatre, and "the vast vault of heaven" re-echoed with the shouts of the wondering multitude.

"Bow Street and Brydges sound with quaint alarms,
Though raw in fields the rude militia swarms;
On seeming arms they make a stout essay,
Then hasten to the tap—the business of the day."

The same was repeated on Kean's entering the building. Kean played on this evening *Richard III.* A supper, in the theatre, with usual consequences, closed this memorable night. "The Feast of Reason was soon lost in "The flow of a stream more potent than Soul," while the last toast—

"Fruges adde, Ceres—et frugibus adde racemos—
Vitibus et vates, vatibus adde diem."

The following is a copy of an original letter, with which we have been favoured during the progress of these Memoirs; and which, though not immediately incidental to the work, may nevertheless be found not unacceptable, as it is written with much taste and gallantry, and bears the signature of Edmund Kean. It is addressed to a professional

lady, on the subject of her contemplated *debut* at Drury Lane Theatre. This event, however, never took place, her first London appearance being made at another establishment, where she speedily became a favourite, and in a great measure realized the high opinion Kean had entertained of her theatrical merits and general accomplishments :

“DEAR MADAM,—The deep impression which my judgment received respecting your talents, on the only occasion I ever had of witnessing them, has been by no means effaced—nor, believe me, has my desire been lessened, of bringing them into a wider sphere of action. I have written to Mr. Elliston, who has ever expressed himself anxious to give the earliest opportunity to the claims of real merit—a declaration which, I believe, in respect of your sex, he has always implicitly observed. He begs you will address a letter to him, stating under what engagements you are at the present moment, so that he may make an offer to you accordingly.

“Believe me, my dear madam, the impression you made on me in your acting the part of *Rosalie Somers*, is never to be eradicated. For myself, I fear you may be in some measure answerable for a diminution of whatever fame I may have possessed, for I shall never act again with the vigour and spirit I did on that evening. Who shall presume to say, after this, that it matters little what may be an actor’s

companion in the dramatic scene—that there is no such thing as real feeling in the art ; or if there be, that it is prejudicial, rather than conducive to impressive effects? Madam, I avow an inspiration on that evening, I never before felt. If clime and scenery make your poets, the companion of our labours makes the actor.

“ One word further, dear madam, which is still more for your private ear. Do not put too much confidence in your friend, Mrs. M. If I were called on for the most pointed illustration of danger, I should say, 'tis the confidence which one woman reposes in another. It was an observation of the celebrated Madame Maintenon, ‘ that a female had better be seen at a play with any man, than at church with certain women.’ ”

“ The contents of the pocket-book are sacred.

E. KEAN.”

The above is written in a high tone of admiration, for the fair aspirant to metropolitan fame. But with the artistic sentiments, we are by no means inclined to agree. A good actor certainly shows to advantage by the side of equal merit—art with art; but the betrayal of true natural feeling, particularly if the sentiment be tenderness, would, in effect, be weak and unimpressive on the stage, where all else is artificial—the painted scene, the polished language, the texture of plot or story

—all conventional and somewhat in the advance of probability—the *acting* of the player must be in equal keeping, or his efforts would appear tame, notwithstanding their truth.

Mr. Kean's letter, however, is a valuable fragment to our history. All must confess him a lover of his art, and we are content therefore to run the risk with some few, for believing him no less in love with the lady.

All was again bustle, bustle, in pursuance of the Coronation. Elliston's energies were strengthened by the rebound, and night and morning he was indefatigable in personal exertions for this mighty purpose. With the descriptive *Morning Herald* in his hand, (his sole guide,) he gave all directions necessary, and on the first of August the pageant was produced.

As a piece of theatrical effect, this was perhaps the most complete ever represented on the English stage. Faithful in its delineation, gorgeous in its appointments, replete in its auxiliaries, and profuse in its expenditure, the "Coronation" at once attracted the attention and admiration of the whole town. Nearly two hundred men, in the employ of the India Company, were engaged at Drury Lane on this occasion. Each man was known, in the theatre, by the office or character to which he was appointed ; and, on a certain occasion, one of them

being taken ill, and thereby unable to attend the theatre at night, thus wrote to the manager :—

“ The Lord Chancellor presents his compliments to Mr. Elliston, and regrets that sudden illness prevents his fulfilling his duties on the present evening.”

So perfect was the representation of the “ Coronation” at Drury Lane, that Messrs. Nash and Mackenzie addressed the lessee, as follows :

“ Messrs. Nash and Mackenzie present respects to Mr. Elliston, begging to return thanks for his kindness in allowing them to draw the accurate costume, &c., of the theatre, and will feel great pleasure in taking the earliest opportunity of publicly acknowledging the favour.

“ Gerrard Street, August 21st, 1821.”

During the unprecedented run of this spectacle, various amusing characteristic anecdotes were in circulation respecting the “ Great Lessee.” There is no doubt that the extraordinary success of the piece, the crowded assembly, the heated atmosphere, and his own highly rectified temperament, not unfrequently qualified by more material alcohol, produced the transmutation of his wits, or perhaps drove him completely out of them. That there were moments in which he verily believed himself, not the shadow but the substance of monarchy,

there can be no question. He felt not, indeed, with *Macbeth*, that—

“To be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief.”

And when, amid the acclamations of hot-pressed Drury, threading his way through the “upturned wondering eyes” of all London in the pit, he exclaimed, “Bless you, my people!” he believed himself no less than “The Lord’s anointed.” No astrolabe could measure his altitude :

“A strong conceit is rich—so mortals deem,
“If not to be, ’tis glorious yet to seem.”

A Coronation medal was now struck by instruction of the Great Lessee, and specimens were presented, for several nights, to the first two hundred persons who entered the theatre.

At the annual meeting of proprietors, in July, the chairman highly eulogized the lessee, who, in addition to the fulfilment of all his contracts, had raised a portico to the building, at his own cost.

On the 8th of August an official notice was forwarded to the manager, that, in consequence of the demise of her Majesty, the theatre should, on that evening, be closed.

The day after the memorable funeral, reports were very generally in circulation, that the Queen’s death had been occasioned by poison, administered

to her in a cup of coffee at Drury Lane Theatre, by the connivance of Elliston.

That the Queen partook neither of coffee nor refreshment of any kind, was no refutation of this wild report. A portion of the public was determined the bantling rumour should not be strangled in its birth, and nursed the imp with unremitting attention. The buz was a well-flavoured, spicy, piece of *sucreries*, and highly relished. "Elliston had poisoned the Queen!" The *caquet*, like the "quarrel," as *Sir Lucius* observes, "was a very pretty one as it stood," and was "not to be spoilt by any explanation." Elliston had poisoned the Queen!

One of the earliest intimations Elliston received of this act of regicide, was from his facetious friend, Jack Taylor.

"Are you aware of a strange report in circulation, respecting yourself and the Queen? They say,

'That thou hast killed the sweetest innocent
That ere did lift up eye!'

Are you not content to be yourself nightly crowned, but you must kill your Queen for pastime? But so runs the tale, from one end of the town to the other. I have written a paragraph for to-night, calculated to stop this absurdity—for it is not every absurdity that is amusing.

"Yours truly, JOHN TAYLOR."

"August 10th, 1821, Sun Office, Strand."

See another. A man really in earnest always excites an interest :

“ SIR,—I am in a public way myself, and it is my duty to let you know all know you. You have poisoned the queen, and she knows it, and all the world knows it. Her majesty drank something you put into it, and everybody knows it. Shame upon you, you traitor !—but you shall be brought to justice. You know very well that you was employed by government to do it, and this is the way how the people who pay taxes are paid. But, as all knows it, your reward will be different from what you think of—the gallows—and well you deserve it.

“ I am, “ A TRADESMAN.

“ P.S.—When are you going to pay your iron-monger ? I know something about that, too.”

Innumerable were Elliston's anonymous correspondents on this mortal subject ; few offering hope or religious consolation to the sinner ; but most of them consigning him to that place not be mentioned to ears polite ; and one of them concluding, by observing that, as he must be hanged, it would be a good opportunity for Mr. Kean's taking the theatre ! Elliston received also a letter from “ Invisibline ” on this terrific occasion :

“ Friday Evening.

“ MY FRIEND,—The report of your having poisoned the queen was a strange one ; but another

equally strange is going about—namely, that the report was of your own raising. I can believe almost any absurdity of you—to be accused of poisoning a crowned head, is no common piece of reputation, and will make another glaring patch in your harlequin jacket.

“ Is it possible you do not see clearly the true character of your city friend, with whom you are becoming more and more intimate ; or are his personal qualities so dazzling, that you forget he is little better than a rogue, and will, some day, prove it in your own case ? He offers very fairly, and you fancy he is liberally trusting you, while, in fact, you are all the time putting too much confidence in him. How can you select for your bosom friend a man whom your excellent wife abhorred, on such good grounds ?

“ If you deem this letter harsh, remember, at the same time, it comes from one who daily prays for your happiness.”

These repeated mysterious communications from this unknown correspondent, as we have had occasion elsewhere to observe, frequently hurried poor Elliston to a state of frenzy. The accuracy of her statements puzzled him exceedingly, whilst the pointed accusations, though having, perhaps, but a momentary effect, yet touched his conscience nearer than any reproaches he was elsewhere in the habit of meeting.

Elliston was absolutely fond of *vagabondizing*. We are not sure that he did not, at times, prefer embarking in a small theatrical scheme, to the splendour of the monarchy of spacious Drury.

We have been told by one of his family that, the dinner for which he had the greatest relish was a couple of kidneys, purchased by himself, and carried home by his own hands on a skewer !

At the close of one of his seasons at Drury Lane, he left London and opened the Coventry Theatre.

The play was O'Keefe's " Wild Oats," in which Elliston enacted his favourite part of *Rover*, and Keeley was *Sim*.

We have had occasion to remark, in the earlier pages of this history, that, to the uninitiated, the lamentable want of "properties" in a country theatre, and the absurd shifts that are occasionally made for them, would scarcely be credited.

In the first scene of the second act of " Wild Oats," it is essential that a shower of rain should as distinctly be heard by the audience, as a shower of applause should catch the ear of the actor ; but as the "*drop*" came down to finish the first act, the prompter informed Mr. Elliston that there was not a drop of water in the house.

" Then open a bottle of wine," said Elliston. Necessity is the mother of invention, but true genius is never at a loss, for Robert William instantly sent out to the nearest chandler's shop for a

new sheet of brown paper : how this was to be used we have yet to detail.

The philosophical adage, which inculcates that "If you cannot snow white, you must snow brown," could not have been of any possible use on the present occasion, as it would not apply to rain. But, at the exact moment that the shower was to be heard, without, Elliston, with prodigious energy, commenced rubbing the brick wall behind the side scene, with the new sheet of brown paper. This produced a something of a sound ; an admixture of scratching and hissing.

The stage direction runs—

"Exeunt Sim and Jane. (A shower of rain.) Enter ROVER hastily."

Upon this, Elliston put the sheet of brown paper into Keeley's hands, as the latter came off the stage, saying, "Fire away, Bob! as much like water as you can."

Then Rover rushed on the stage, buttoning up his coat at the collar, and uttering the words of the part :

"Here's a pelting shower and no shelter. Poor Tom's a-cold. I'm wet through!" (*Elliston aside.*) "Louder! louder!—fire the water, Bob!"

Keeley rubbed the sheet of paper against the wall to the uttermost extent of his little arms.

Banks (the reader may recollect) has invited *Rover* into his cottage, after *Gammon* had refused to admit him within the farm-house.

Rover.—"The poor cottager! (*to Banks*) and the substantial farmer, (*turning to Gammon.*) (*He kneels.*) "Hear, Nature, dear goddess, hear!"

(*Aside.*) "Quicker, Bob! rain! rain!"

"If ever you designed to make his corn-fields fruitful, change thy purpose; that, from the blighted ear no grain may fall to fat his stubble goose!"

(*Aside.*) "Not a bit like a shower! Pelt away, Bob!"

"And when to town he drives his hogs, so like himself, oh, let him feel the soaking rain!"

(*Aside.*) "Pour, pour away, for God's sake, Bob!"

"Then may he curse his crime too late, and know how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is —"

"Damme, but I am spouting in the rain all this time."

(*Rover rises, and runs into Banks's.*)

Elliston (*without.*) "A lamentable expedient that sheet of paper, Bob; it has thrown a damp, but not a whit like a shower."

A lengthy correspondence between Colman and Elliston terminated about this time, in which the Great Lessee had been in negotiation with the dramatist for his valuable services in the duties of authorship for Drury Lane Theatre. The "match" was abruptly broken off by the *volage* manager—we believe, not handsomely. Colman's final letter we subjoin:—

"Brighton, 24th October, 1821."

"DEAR ELLISTON,—I have just seen Fladgate, and the matter is at an end. After our late communication (strangely broken off, but no matter), there is still a chief proprietor, in one of the great theatres, ready to promote my views in bringing to an issue the question which, by bare possibility, may be agitated relative to my dramatic writings. His risk will be, as yours would have been, little or nothing; but this instance of his kindness will, perhaps, induce you to forego the sentiment, so flatteringly expressed to me in one of your letters, that I have not a more devoted or affectionate friend than yourself. But to the point, on which I must now trouble you. Pending our negotiation, I mentioned to you a subject which I proposed to dramatize; and, if our bargain had held, Mr. Kean might have been the hero of the piece. Of this subject, since you have whistled me off as unexpectedly as you called me on, I now mean to avail myself for the Covent Garden house.

"I should not like to lose my labour on a fabrication which might be anticipated, through my previous suggestion of the groundwork; I therefore trust to your honour, that you will not forestall me at Drury Lane, in a matter imparted to you confidentially, under the peculiar circumstances of our treaty.

“ Favour me with an answer, at your earliest convenience, addressed to me, at the Post-office, Brighton. I am, dear Elliston, yours sincerely,

“ G. COLMAN.”

On the 5th December, Elliston having quitted the theatre somewhat earlier than usual, was returning homeward in his carriage, when he was seized by a sudden impression that some person was sitting at his elbow, whispering in his ear. His nerves had been overwrought for some days, by excitement of every description, and the debility under which he now laboured, being, in fact, the reaction of undue demands on his health, was increased, rather than removed, by further stimulants. The present “ cup too low” was, in fact, the consequence of the cup too much, for he was too apt to borrow health, as he had been in the habit of borrowing money—namely, on usurious interest, and leaving the question of liquidating funds to the will of Providence.

The whisperer in the coach still continued to torment him. Elliston called to his driver to pull up, and having jumped out of the vehicle, desired peremptorily the intruder to descend also. After some short expostulation on the part of his servant, Elliston was induced again to enter the carriage, when the man very judiciously drove him to his friend, Dr. Pearson.

Fortunately the doctor was at home, and having succeeded in quieting the mind of his patient, the lessee, once again, was on his way home.

It appears, however, that no sooner had he again placed himself in the vehicle, than the fit returned, and so powerfully was he impressed with the truth of what he had asserted, that on his arrival in Stratford Place, candles were brought from the house, that the interior of the carriage might be thoroughly searched. No stranger having been found, on this satisfactory inspection, the bewildered manager declared he had slipped away before the servants could be summoned.

Elliston continued for two hours under the alarming influence of this attack. On reaching his bedroom, he exclaimed that he was wet to the skin by water pouring down from the ceiling, and again were the attendants called together to examine the roof of his chamber. He was at length persuaded to enter his bed, where he soon fell asleep, and at ten o'clock on the following morning he was in his own room at the theatre, as well as ever—a full hour before other persons engaged in the business of the day! On his table lay a note of tender regard from “Invisiblina!”

The great success of the “Coronation” induced the experiment of another “Superb Spectacle;” and extensive preparations were presently in for-

wardness for the production of a new piece, " Giovanni in Ireland." This piece was originally projected by Moncrief, but with the view of rendering it as perfect as possible, the MS. was sent to Mr. James Smith, the Hon. G. Lamb, and others, for the benefit of their suggestions. The gallimaufry passed through half a dozen hands; and, like the knife, which one while had a new handle, and at another a new blade, its identity at last was entirely lost; and the result was, by the consent of all parties, a restoration to its pristine form.

During the time this drama was in rehearsal, the King made his visit to Ireland, and was present at the " Installation of the Knights of St. Patrick." This coincidence was deemed fortunate; so that, at a very considerable additional expense, Elliston determined to embody, in his new piece, a representation of this imposing ceremony.

" Giovanni in Ireland" was produced on the 21st of December. The first act gave a representation of the Kilkenny Theatre, the most complete scenic *ensemble* ever achieved; here was an entire theatre, two tier of boxes, beautifully decorated and filled with veritable flesh and blood; an orchestra; musicians; and a pit blooming with the very flower of Kilkenny. To the Drury Lane spectators the scene was, emphatically, "*Veluti in speculum.*" Giovanni was seated in his stage-box, whose counterpart, no doubt, could have been pointed out in

the corresponding place of Drury itself. Dandies and flirts contemplated their own likenesses, whilst the growling critic was face to face with his second self. But the piece, alas ! was a failure, and unequivocally condemned. So confidently was a contrary result anticipated, that no pantomime had, this season, been put into preparation; which defection, with the enormous outlay of "Giovanni in Ireland," was a financial blow to Elliston, which he never recovered.

"*Aux premières amours.*" Recourse was again had to the "Coronation." Failure on other points, by no means damped the ovation of its hundredth night. A kind of fête was given, on this occasion, in the Green-room; and champagne and bon-mots went merrily round. With the manager, the glass either celebrated his triumphs or drowned his misfortunes.

Concurrent with these losses, was an award made in respect of Elliston's portico to his new building in Leamington, which had been pronounced an encroachment; in pursuance of which judgment, the defendant was called on to pay the parish of Leamington 150*l.* and costs, which, with his own expenses, amounted to 206*l.* A severe and oppressive sentence—the very nuisance having been since represented by the identical complainants, as an ornament to the village.

In February, (1822,) Elliston left London for

Paris. His object being the acquisition of foreign novelty for the current season at Drury Lane. Indulgence—excess—had materially invaded both his health and estate, the reparation of both he now suddenly resolved on undertaking. He “took the pledge,” and faithfully kept it, as though he had bound himself, not by the name, but the very gospel of “Matthew,” for two months—“not so much, not two”—and we again find him but little the better for this sickly smattering of fortitude.

In these matters, Elliston had a most happy knack of juggling with his conscience, and under some pious fraud, came off acquitted in the tribunal of his own judgment *sans tache, sans reproche*. We remember to have heard of a traveller in Italy who on his journey fell in with as good a catholic as any in the Pope’s dominions, but was yet enjoying plenary indulgence on a general fast. “How is this?” demanded the Lutheran.

“We have a dispensation to eat what we please, when we are on a journey,” was the reply.

Some few weeks, however, afterwards, the same traveller fell in with this holy man at Ferrara, where they were both sojourning, when on a *jour maigre*, he again beheld his friend over a fat capon, a venison pasty and a flask of wine.

“Holloa! my friend—how now! I know you have a dispensation when on a journey, but surely you are now sinning.”

“Nay, not so fast,” rejoined the round, fat, oily,

man of God, "*all life is but a journey*, and, St. Anthony grant, I have a good many miles to travel yet!"

It was something after this manner that our friend, Robert William, rendered all his indulgences harmless.

As *Francis Quarles* sings—

"There is a kind of conscience some men keep,
Is like a member that's benumb'd with sleep—
Which, as it gathers blood, and wakes again,
Shoots out, and pricks, and feels as big as ten."

If not advantage, Elliston reaped considerable pleasure in his journey to Paris. He had been well received and entertained by Talma, and much fêted both by strangers and his own countrymen. In March, the lessee returned to England, and in May his majesty again visited Drury Lane Theatre. The entertainments on this occasion were, "The Siege of Belgrade" and "Monsieur Tonson;" in which latter, the king expressed himself greatly pleased with the acting of Gattie, which distinguished honour falling to the share of one who had plenty of vanity to spare, not unnaturally set the whole supply into a blaze, on which the engines of Drury wits played unremittingly, but without the effect of extinction.

Amongst Elliston's many correspondents was a lady, who within a short time from the period of which we are now speaking, became still more

celebrated. Wilson again! "Of the same name, but one of softer nature." La belle Harriette.

She writes as follows :—

"DEAR MR. ELLISTON,—I think you wish me well—but you know I am very poor. The farce of the "Deux Jaloux," which I send you, you will recollect to have seen. I have altered it and adapted it, still more, to the English taste. I have cut out the original songs and supplied their places by my own poetry—impudent enough, you will say. In one word, the piece is yours for ten pounds, and I think you will allow I part with my favours at a price low indeed—new poetry for an "old song." If you accept this, have the civility to enclose the cash, addressed to me, Mrs. Harriette Rochford, Post-office, Dublin, or leave it for me in Stratford Place, and I will send. I hope I may expect gentlemanly treatment from you, who have ever professed yourself my friend. Mr. C. Kemble has seen the comedy, I confess, and rejected it for want of tact—a pretty charge, in faith! but he behaved very handsomely respecting the privileges of his theatre. As for you, you owe me some little kindness, but I do not presume on this. I hope you will like the piece from its own merits.—Just off to Dublin.

"H. R."

CHAPTER XI.

Extensive alterations at Drury Lane—Elliston at Leamington—More vagaries—The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester—The “Leamingtonian Band”—Elliston “plays many parts”—Mr. Thomas Moore—A scaffold dinner—High jokes—A new theatre—Colman’s address—“School for Scandal”—A letter from Kean—A second epistle—Kean and Young—Stanfield and Roberts—New Monthly Magazine—A critique—Elliston at Croydon—A humorous adventure—“The Chinese sorcerer”—“Gagging”—Rival tragedians—Dr. Kitchener—A dinner—Ill-sorted guests—A French gentleman—A book-shelf dancer—John Harley—His adventures—Knight’s benefit—Bunn, stage-director—Reynolds—“Stella Leatherlungs”—Macready—Cox v. Kean.

SCARCELY anything succeeded this season at Drury Lane. Kean brought a play to the theatre, entitled “Owen, Prince of Powis,” in which he acted the principal part. This drama was but a scrofulous subject, and expired of the disease on the third night. Kean next attempted the character of *Sir Pertinax Macsycophant*, which we might be inclined to say, was about the most miserable exhibition ever made by a great actor; but, as Dryden has observed of his rival, D’Urfey, “You don’t know my friend, he’ll do worse yet.”

314 EXTENSIVE ALTERATIONS AT DRURY LANE.

After a service of forty years on the boards of Drury, Miss Tidswell, who, as we have before noticed, was, perhaps, the only person positively in the secret of Kean's parentage, took her final benefit at this theatre. Kean played on this occasion *Don Felix*, which our readers may, peradventure, suspect was the "worse yet," which we have hinted above. Bad, it certainly was; but "benefit" vagaries are not rigidly to be criticised; and as the actor, by this attempt, was really paying a debt of gratitude to his respected protectress, he is so far entitled to our approbation, and more particularly as he also defrayed the expenses of the benefit, amounting to nearly one hundred pounds.

This season, though disastrous to the lessee, did not find him behind-hand in any of his engagements with the proprietary of the theatre. At the annual meeting in August, Elliston was highly complimented by the chairman for that implicit fulfilment of all his obligations.

Preliminaries having been entered into for very extensive alterations in the theatre, a model of the intended improvements was sent to the King, and the necessary previous work of demolition was at once begun.

Within a few days the whole interior of the building was one chaotic mass of rubbish, the walls being laid bare to the very back of the boxes.

The reconstruction of the theatre was from the designs of Mr. Beazley, and the despatch and ability which he exhibited in completion of the work was a subject of just encomium. The parapet of the new boxes was brought forward five feet, contracting the pit, consequently, to the same limits. The entire ceiling was lowered, bodily, fourteen feet, an operation which excited great interest and some apprehension—the work was, however, most successfully accomplished. The saloon, to the full extent, was lined with looking-glass, the pilasters representing Sienna marble. The cost of the whole amounted to 22,000*l*.

During the progress of the work, the “Great Lessee” found opportunity for frequent visits to his beloved Leamington,—the “Petit Trianon” of Drury’s monarch.

“You should have seen, sir, how we received the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester,” said Charles Elliston, addressing his father on a certain morning.

“Ay, they visited Leamington Spa,” answered Elliston; “but how did you receive their royal highnesses?”

The three sons were all alive at this interrogation, when William modestly stated, that they had endeavoured to accomplish it in their father’s own way.

Elliston’s eyes glistened, and he said, “Proceed.”

William went on; "We were aware, sir, that the royal couple would arrive on Thursday; so, by the side of the bowling-green we erected a triumphal arch, with scaffold poles, flags, and laurels, and Charles painted on a paper frieze, in large letters,

"WELCOME TO LEAMINGTON SPA."

"Ay, ay — good!" said Elliston, evidently pleased.

"Well, then we sent over to the Birmingham Theatre for the twelve muskets, which I duly loaded. Henry went down and told the work-people employed on the new buildings, that the royal family were coming, and that they must be welcomed with three cheers. He then ran to the girl's Sunday school, and informed the mistress that the duchess would fully expect to see all the girls in their best attire, ranged in a line, with their Bibles in their hands. In the meantime, Charles had the seraphine moved from the library behind the shrubs in the bowling-green, and was all ready to play 'God save the King.'"

"Excellent fellows!" said Elliston.

"In due time the travelling carriages came in sight," continued William. "I had got my twelve loaded muskets on the roof of the house, and proceeded to discharge them one by one; the report of the guns brought every body in Leamington out of doors; the children scampered from the school,

and Henry arranged them on each side the way; the workmen and labourers assembled; I kept firing the salutes, the men huzzaing, which their royal highnesses acknowledged to be highly complimentary—the duchess must have felt it extremely, for she raised her hands up to her ears at every explosion. Presently Colonel Higgins popped his head from the carriage window, and requested that there might be no more firing, as it startled the horses. I then loudly gave the word of command, ‘Stop the salute.’ It was very lucky that the Colonel spoke just in time, for I had discharged all my twelve muskets.

“Charles now played the national anthem on the seraphine. The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, with great urbanity and condescension, bowed.”

“Bless their royal hearts,” said Elliston, with emotion.

“And now,” added William, “in the sight of the august visitors, I threw up two or three pigeons, to give the notion that the news of the safe arrival of the royal party was to be conveyed elsewhere—they were our own pouters.”

“Admirable—admirable!” said the delighted father.

“The little girls kept bobbing their best curtseys, and Henry, going closer to the carriage window, produced an address, which he had written the

previous night, and which he was about reading, when his royal highness looked out of the window, and interrupted the sentences of the address by saying, 'Ay, ay; very well, very well, very well!' Colonel Higgins now ordered the postillions to drive on; and off they went with three cheers from the workmen."

"Did you get an account of all the ceremonies inserted in the 'Warwickshire Advertiser,' " anxiously inquired Elliston. On receiving an answer in the affirmative, Elliston turned once again to his sons, and impressively pronounced, "My children are a blessing to me; the education I have given them has not been thrown away. Excellent, clever fellows!—my own boys—my own boys,—my own dear boys!—As a matter of course their royal highnesses patronised the library?"

"Oh, yes," answered the juvenile managers; "and have brought us into great repute and fashion."

"My own way, to the value of a hair," added Elliston.

The little band of *Leamingtonians* were now engaged at Coventry, in which they acted four nights out of the six; but the manager not deeming it expedient to close his "Spa" bandbox, he was considerably puzzled in his representation of plays at both places, with one imperfect company. The Lea-

mington visitors, however, he had long been in the habit of treating just as his humour suggested; and, with his accustomed nonchalance, he advertised "Three Weeks after Marriage," and the "Wags of Windsor," with only himself, one lady, a couple of amateur tradesmen, and the door-keeper's son, to sustain the several parts.

On another night, he acted the "Liar," and literally played, or rather spoke, the words of every character in the piece. *Miss Godfrey* and *Grantham* were certainly dressed for the parts, and so, after a fashion, was *Papillon*; but the two former being lodging-house keepers in Leamington, and the latter, the aforesaid door-keeper's son, could not be supposed to know much of the author's text, and as little perhaps of the plot of the drama. Elliston enjoined them only to say nothing, an injunction they obeyed, if we may venture the pun, to the very *letter*, whilst our hero repeated the whole dialogue, sending the dummies off, or beckoning them on, according to their proper exits and entrances. The tact and cleverness with which he accomplished all this gained him, beyond doubt, greater applause than if the piece had been soberly acted; in fact, the more tricks he played, the more people seemed to like him, till he became a little *Pickle* of fifty, surrounded by a whole community of good-natured, forgiving uncles.

Elliston returned to London. From the following note, which he received from Mr. Thomas Moore, it appears the manager had applied in this distinguished quarter for a new drama. Mr. Moore writes :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—I have, as usual, a thousand apologies to make for not sooner answering your letter. After all, I had nothing to say, which (though some authors, as well as orators, seem to think differently) is the best excuse in the world for not attempting anything.

“I still dream of the stage, but whether the dream will ever be realized, is a very, very doubtful point. At all events, just at this moment, other tasks forbid me to think of it.

“I am happy to find that both you and old Drury are so stoutly on your legs again. With every wish for a continuance of your prosperity, I am, dear Elliston,

“Very truly yours, T. MOORE.

“September 5th, 1822.”

On the 22nd September, 1822, the ceremony of “striking the scaffold,” at Drury Lane, took place—a strike amongst the workmen, of a far more amicable nature, than many which may have passed under our statistic observations.

On this occasion an eccentric party, well suited

to the singularity of the case, assembled on the scaffold, vibrating within five feet of the ceiling and above fifty from the pit. On this spot a rump-steak collation was actually dressed for a dozen persons—Elliston presiding, and his architect, Beazley, facing him.

Suspended, like Mahomet's coffin, between heaven and earth, the undulating scaffolding appeared to produce the sensation of ebriation, without the pleasure of getting drunk ; but more faithful to the bottle than the prophet, the present party had too great a respect to the doctrine of cause and effect to be so idly convinced, and consequently "availed themselves of the pleasure" of the good old system.

"It is amazingly cold here," remarked Elliston, shivering.

"That is easily accounted for : we are near the poles," said the incorrigible Beazley.

And, again, the waiters, treading heavily round the table, put the whole party in motion.

Elliston was evidently nervous ; but he endeavoured to carry it off with a joke, muttering, "This is at present our board, I should be very sorry if it were our lodging."

"It is your proper place," said Wallack, "you hold the highest situation in this theatre."

Elliston here accidentally dropped his carving-knife—it fell between two scaffold-boards, and went down below—the knife was snapped.

“ There — there’s a blade in the pit,” said Elliston.

“ And Handel in the orchestra,” replied Beazley.

“ The health of Mr. Elliston ” was now proposed, “ and brilliant success to him in his arduous and adventurous undertaking.”

This being drunk with enthusiasm ; Elliston rose to return thanks ; but at the same moment there was a peculiar jarring on the floor on which they were perched, which caused the chairman to make an inquiry, what it meant ?

Mr. Grissel, the builder, imagined “ that it was only the Irish labourers, who were beginning to untie the cross pole to strike the scaffold.”

“ In that case,” remarked Elliston, “ the sooner I return thanks, for the honour you have done me, the better, for I now think it high time to descend.”

But so elevated were the party that it really became a question how they were to accomplish this ; when it was gravely suggested they should be suffered to remain where they were, until the return of reason ; whereupon the carpenters from below, feeling they should have a long holiday, began removing the ladders, by which the revellers had mounted. On further deliberation, however, it was conjectured that, should a guest tumble out of bed, the accident might not be a little startling ; and though we might have

heard of raining “cats and dogs,” yet a shower of authors, actors, and architects, would, in all probability, be the most alarming storm which had ever occurred under the vault of this painted Olympus. With extreme caution, therefore, this unsteady affair was at length brought to an understanding.*

* To commemorate the almost incredible expedition with which the work had been accomplished, a brass plate was deposited in the centre of the pit, near the orchestra, twenty feet below the level, bearing the following inscription :—

“George IV. King.

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

The interior of this National Theatre was entirely pulled down and rebuilt, in the space of fifty-eight days, and re-opened on the 12th of October, 1822,

by

Robert William Elliston, Esq.

Sub-committee.

John Calcraft, Esq., M.P.

John Soane, Esq.

Hon. George Lamb, M.P.

George Robins, Esq.

Sir Thomas Turton, Bart.

James Winston, Esq. Acting Manager.

Thomas Dibdin, Esq. Stage Manager.

William Dunn, Esq. Treasurer.

John Saul Stage Carpenter.

Henry Peto Builder

Frederick and Henry Crace . Decorators.

Gaetano Marinari Scene-painter.

Thomas Rogers Wagstaffe . . Assistant Architect.

Samuel Beazley Architect.”

The theatre in fact opened on the 16th.

On the day of the opening of Drury Lane Theatre, this season, Mrs. Garrick died. She was dressed for attending the play, on this very evening.

On the 16th of October, the theatre was re-opened ; an address, written by Colman, and spoken by Terry, distinguished the occasion.

Since Theatres so oft in this our time
 Are launch'd upon the town with solemn rhyme.
 Thoughts ready-made, to fit the theme are found,
 Like last year's tunes on barrel-organs ground ;
 And Poets furbish, in the bathos style,
 Old tropes and figures for the new-built pile.
 The Sock and Buskin named, the Muses follow—
 The Opera always prefaced by Apollo ;
 But Architecture's claims when we enforce,
 Vitruvius and Palladio come of course ;
 Till, after a long dance through Greece and Rome,
 To Dryden, Otway, Congreve, getting home,
 We end with Shakspeare's *Ghost* still hovering on our dome! }

Alas ! how vainly will our modern fry
 Strive with the old Leviathans to vie !
 How foolishly comparison provoke
 With lines that Johnson writ and Garrick spoke.
 Abandon we a strain, without more fuss,
 Which, when attempted, has abandon'd us ;
 And let us guiltless be—however dull—
 Of murdering the “sublime and beautiful.”

Thus then, our Manager, who scouts the fears
 Of pulling an old house about his ears,
 Has spared of our late edifice's pride
 The outward walls—and little else beside :
 Anxious has been that labour to complete
 Which makes magnificence and comfort meet ;
 Anxious that multitudes may sit at ease,
 And scantier numbers in no desert freeze—
 That ample space may mark the lib'ral plan,
 But never strain the eyes or ears of man.

Look round and judge ;—his efforts all are waste,
 Unless you stamp them as a work of taste ;

Nor blame him for transporting from his floors
Those old offenders here—the two Stage-doors—
Doors which have oft with burnish' panels stood,
And golden knockers glittering in a wood,
Which on their posts through ev'ry change remain'd
Fast as Bray's Vicar, whosoever reigned ;
That served for palace, cottage, street, or hall,
Used for each place, and out of place in all ;
Stationed, like watchmen, who in lamplight sit,
For all their business of the night unfit.

So much for visual sense. What follows next
Is chiefly on the histrionic text ;
And our Adventurer has toiled to store
His list of favourites with some favourites more ;
Sought planets roving from their former sphere,
And fixed, as stars, the brilliant wanderers here ;
To Drury's Luminaries added light,
And made his sky with constellations bright.
Rich the repast—and may, we trust, insure
The custom of the scenic epicure.

The play was *The School for Scandal*, the heirloom of this house, and well chosen as an omen of the dramatic excellence which the theatre made such resolute promises to realize. Terry played *Sir Peter* in place of Munden, who was “ sick ;” Mrs. West was *Lady Teazle* ; Harley, *Sir Benjamin Backbite* ; Mrs. Glover, *Mrs. Candour* ; Miss Smithson, *Maria* ; Cooper, *Joseph Surface* ; Dowton, *Sir Oliver* ; and Elliston, *Charles Surface*. The actors as they successively came forward, were received with plaudits ; Dowton was peculiarly welcomed. Elliston, on his appearance in the chair, as *Charles Surface*, was called to the front, and made his bows amidst much applause and congratulations.

Previous to the commencement of the season, an official letter was sent to Kean on the subject of his future services ; the tragedian makes the following reply to the manager :—

“ Your treasurer has written to me, by which I find Mr. Young is engaged for thirty nights to act with me. Now this is what I call an impudent proceeding. The throne is mine !—mine ! I say—no one shall come near it ; and I will maintain it even at the expense of expatriation. To whatever quarter of the globe I may sail, all shall acknowledge me the first English actor. *Nil ortum tale, fatentes.*

“ When I come to London, Elliston, I open in *Richard the Third*—my second character, *Othello*,—*Hamlet*—*Lear* ; and so through my principal cast. If Young is ambitious to act with me, he must commence with *Iago*, and when the whole of *my* characters is exhausted, we may then turn our thoughts to ‘ *Cymbeline* ’ and ‘ *Venice Preserved*. ’ If you think Young will answer your purpose better than Kean—take him. “ EDMUND KEAN.”

After a few days came the annexed extraordinary composition. The reader is at liberty to draw his own inferences, under what state of mind or body it was written :

“ Rothsay, Isle of Bute, October.

“ ELLISTON,—I cannot be in London till Monday, the 11th of next month. Advertise me for *Richard*,

on that night ; you must forgive my being jealous of my hard-earned laurels. I know how brittle is the ground I stand upon. Young has many advantages that I have not—a commanding figure, sonorous voice, and above all, lordly connexions—I kick all such pests to the devil, for I hate a lord. I am, therefore, coming to meet an opposition made up of my own enemies (which, like locusts, almost darken the sun), Mr. Young's friends, and his very great abilities—with nothing but humble genius to support me, a mere ephemeron, at the command of caprice—the same breath that nourishes the flame this day, to-morrow puts it out.—*Aut Cæsar aut nullus*, is my text. If I become secondary in any point of view, I shrink into absolute insignificance—I shall not trouble the world longer than two years.

I have taken a house in Scotland, for the purpose of retirement with my family at the termination of my engagements, and all I ask of you is, to let me go with my reputation undiminished—the world forgetting and by the world forgot. As the Covent Garden hero comes upon my ground, the challenger, I have doubtless my choice of weapons ; he *must* play *Iago* before I act *Jaffier*. I am told he is wonderfully great in *Pierre*—if so, I am beaten. This must not be. I cannot bear it. I would rather go in chains to Botany Bay. I am not ashamed to say, I am afraid of the contest. Will you take the THOUSAND POUNDS, and dismiss me ? I shall be at Dumfries from the 28th to the 30th.

“ ELLISTON, my *dear* Elliston, I *know you*. I see the deep entangled web, you have extended for me ; but that Providence which has guided me through all the perils of worldly chicanery, fights for me now, and will defeat the plot, though *Coutts' Bank* flowed into the coffers of my enemy, and its suite composed of lords and auctioneers.

“ Yours, &c.,

E. KEAN.”

On the 27th of November, Kean and Young met on the boards of Drury Lane in the parts of *Othello* and *Iago*. The receipts on the first night amounted to 523*l*. They afterwards played *Jaffier* and *Pierre*, to nearly the same amount. Whatever attraction these two bodies might have possessed, they had certainly no cohesion. On Kean's part the meeting was a distempered, jealous, and vindictive occurrence ; a *foiblesse* to which the “ lordly mind ” of Young was superior, whose only temperamental display was that of calm indifference. With this state of things, the manager was as little concerned as the public were apprised—suffice, that to all parties, this short jaundiced coalition was highly satisfactory, as several overflowing houses amply testified.

The pantomime for this season entitled “ Gog and Magog,” the composition of Mr. T. Dibdin, was unfortunately condemned on the third night ; and on the 6th of January, an entirely new harlequinade, under the name of the “ Golden Axe ’

was produced, with considerable success, an achievement scarcely credible, when we recollect the old language of "underlining" at Christmas—viz., "On the 26th will be presented the new, grand pantomime, which has been in rehearsal ever since the summer!"*

A new period had now commenced in the dramatic annals, by which the stage acquired a brilliancy in decline, which will render it as memorable in this peculiar feature, as in its pristine days of intrinsic glory.

Stanfield and Roberts had already given to the scene some beautiful specimens of dramatic painting, but it was now that the public witnessed evidences of art, of which they had hitherto no conception. The masterly delineations and exquisite effects of these two artists, became deservedly the admiration of the whole town, and placed them at once in the road to the highest professional honours. Messrs. Stanfield and Roberts at the present period occupy the first rank in our British School of Art. †

* Yet there is nothing which may not be surpassed. Our readers may remember, it has been said, that Sir J. Throgmorton actually sat down to dinner, dressed in a coat which had, that very morning, been wool on the sheep's back.

† Hogarth painted a camp scene for the private theatre of Dr. Woodley, Dean of Winchester. Richards, the secretary to the Royal Academy, was many years principal scene-painter to Covent Garden Theatre; his coadjutors were Messrs. Bowles

The following critique of performances, appeared in a number of the *New Monthly Magazine*. Respecting the writer, there can be no misunderstanding :

“It would be ungrateful not particularly to notice the dramatic exertions of the enterprising manager. His *Tag* (in ‘The Spoiled Child’), was highly fantastical—in his happiest style of farcical whim. His *Walter* in the ‘Children in the Wood,’ on the other hand, was an admirable representation of rough honesty, and manly sorrow ; nothing could be happier than his valorous resolution, springing naturally ; or the mingled humour and feeling of his triumph over the assassin—or his efforts to appear composed, when the fate of the children was doubtful—or the broken accents of joy when he folded them in his arms.

“In ‘Wild Oats’ and ‘The Dramatist’ he has played as vivaciously and as whimsically as ever ; the gentle stroller who goes about rejoicing, to catch that pleasure which is ‘spread through

and Carver. Michael Angelo Rooker was chief scene-painter to Colman’s theatre, in the Haymarket. Walmsey, French, and the younger Catton, were also scene-painters. Hodges, the pupil of Wilson, was appointed scene-painter to the Italian Opera House, held at the Pantheon, after the fire of the old King’s Theatre, in the Haymarket. Signor Hovosielsky, the architect, who rebuilt this theatre, was also scene-painter to the new and splendid stage ; and De Louthembourg, the greatest of the corps, was scene-painter to Drury Lane Theatre, during the management of Garrick.—*Somerset House Gazette*.

the earth to be caught in stray gifts by whoever will find,' and the enthusiastic playwright, seem, indeed, to touch answering chords within his own bosom ; he is evidently born to none of this world's common business, but to his own imperial art : the stage to him ' a kingdom is.' In the arrangement of grotesque farces, of gloriously fleeting melo-drames, and of majestic tragedies, he is in his right place, and fitly exercises the pleasantest of this world's dignities. He is worthy to sip the mantling cup of the town's applause, and to grow light of head and heart by its fumes.

"Let not the public desert him, who loves him even as a personal friend ! Let him long give happiness to crowded audiences, and receive it from them in return. Let him not on this his greatest enterprise, the keeping alive antique revels in old Drury, utterly fail ! There Garrick spread the electrical sympathy from heart to heart in days of yore ; there Siddons first ' came sweeping by '—tragedy's divine priestess ; there Kemble first waved his majestic hand, and walked with the triumphant step of a Roman senator ; there Jordan restored the world-wearied heart to its joyous spring time, by a cordial laugh—it will be an undying disgrace to our age, if this spot, sacred to old joy, be deserted and silent."

On the 1st of January, 1823, Elliston was

seized by a fit of epilepsy as he was passing the threshold of the theatre. He remained in a state of insensibility for many hours, and it was not until the following day, Dr. Pearson permitted him to be removed; when he was conveyed to his house in Stratford Place.

On the last of the same month, another fit seized him, but of a far different character. Barnard, "Poor Barnard" as he was familiarly called—an actor in the Drury Lane company, essayed a benefit at the Croydon Theatre, on which occasion Elliston volunteered his services. Elliston had taken up his quarters at the "Crown Inn," and the accommodations at the theatre not being quite so perfect as he could have wished, he equipped himself at his hostel for the part he was to play at night. The approach to the theatre was by a rough and dirty lane—six o'clock was at hand, and no conveyance readily to be obtained—it rained moreover, at this precise moment, a pelting shower. Elliston, dressed for *Belcour*, was presently to appear on the stage. Throwing over his shoulders a thick blanket, he summoned the ostler to his presence, who being a pretty steady fellow, appeared well to answer the intended purpose. Jumping on the man's shoulders, and binding his Witney coverlid tightly round him, Elliston turned his beast of burden into the lane, and holding an umbrella over the two heads, commenced his journey towards the stage-door of the playhouse.

The grotesque exhibition of our hero on the ostler's shoulders—his silk stockings peeping from beneath the dirty blanket, and his head surmounted by a huge cocked hat, could not fail to excite all the native merriment of a few surrounding chaw-bacons, who were loitering about the place. In fact, the horse-laugh soon mounted to a startling halloo, and many were the casements and cottage-doors which now flew open at the unaccustomed sounds which broke on the ears of the inmates. But Elliston felt that he was in for it, and no doubt would have gone through his martyrdom with a fortitude which would have entitled him to a place, not only amongst the *acts*, but the “monuments” too ; yet Joe, not having quite the patience of his master, became sensibly indignant at such outrageous jeering, and deliberately flopping down our hero in the mud, scampered after the ringleader of the rioters, threatening the most summary vengeance.

Poor *Belcour* was now verily up to his ankles in mud, and the moisture having sucked off one of his shoes in his attempt at escape, the result might have been fatal indeed to the “West Indian,” had he not been rescued by one more humane than his fellows, and carried away a second time, towards the theatre, where he was at last safely deposited.

Buoyant, active, and dauntless as was the tem-

perament of Elliston, he was subject, nevertheless, to moments of depression ; but there was an eccentricity attending even these, not less remarkable, perhaps, than his exuberant vagaries. The Easter piece, under the title of " The Chinese Sorcerer," was in rehearsal. It was Saturday—everything went wrong ; machinery, scenery, actors, all were at fault. In the evening, another rehearsal was appointed, when, to the surprise of his stage-manager and prompter, on walked Elliston to the stage, equipped in admirable character for a journey. Approaching the latter officer (Wilmot), Elliston whispered him in an earnest manner—

" Business of the greatest importance calls me from London to-night ; I must travel one hundred miles before I sleep ;" having said which, he marched as mysteriously out of the theatre as he had entered it.

The rehearsal went on this evening as well and pleasantly as it had before gone harshly and disastrously—all of which our nocturnal traveller was secretly apprised of—when, on the Monday morning, he again walked on the stage in the precise travelling costume, and approaching Wilmot, after the same fashion as yesterday, whispered him—

" I've done it—the business is settled."

The fact is, Elliston, so far from journeying a hundred miles, had not been as many yards from the theatre during his vagary ; and, as to sleep,

in the language of old *Jarvis*, in the play, "his nights had nothing to do with sleep." In the evening also of this very day, he exhibited indications of mental wandering of a far more positive nature than the journey above. His incoherency was so great, that again it was deemed necessary to place him under the care of his friend, Dr. Pearson.

A somewhat curious incident arose out of this Easter piece. The production, in its literary character, was but a dull and pointless affair; the actors, however, by a little infusion of their own mother wit, contrived to raise an occasional laugh, and some evidences of applause. But the author, far from seeing the secret of this partial approbation, was extremely indignant that his dialogue should be so invaded by clowns, whose duty it was to "say no more than what was set down for them," and caused a notice to be fixed up in the Green-room, that it was expected every actor should keep implicitly to the text. The mandate was obeyed, but so dull and heavy was the next night's representation of the "Chinese Sorcerer," that the public nearly condemned it to that place which is said to be the Sorcerer's own element. The author's "notice" was now withdrawn, the actors were permitted to "gag" again (according to the theatrical term), and the "Chinese Sorcerer" had a protracted existence of twenty nights.

Elliston was now subject to further annoyances by the increasing irritability of Kean on the "Young grievance." Young was advertised for *Hamlet*, and Kean was furious—Young was called on to play *Macbeth*, and Kean was like a chained lion. By the letter of some clause in his agreement with Elliston, Kean was actually vested with the power of altering the announcement of plays which the manager might have advertised for certain nights' representation. Of this power Kean availed himself, and the "sixes and sevens" into which he threw the affairs of Drury, may be well imagined.

Both Young and Kean had their partisans. The adherents of the former asserting the higher claims of the antique classic school, to which they declared the truant taste of the town would speedily return ; whilst the friends of the other were loud in their admiration of the striking evidences of genius, which were paramount to the doctrines of any school of art. Thus was it with Quin, who, when he found Garrick admired by the town, said that he (Garrick) was a new *religion*, and as Whitfield was followed for a time, people would return to *church* again. On which Garrick wrote this reply :—

" *Pope* Quin, who damns all churches but his own,
Complains that heresy corrupts the town ;
That *Whitfield* Garrick has misled the age,
And taints the true religion of the stage !

Schism, he cries, has turn'd the nation's brain,
But eyes will open to the *church* again !
Thou, great infallible ! forbear to roar,
Thy bulls and errors are revered no more—
When doctrines meet with general approbation,
It is not *heresy* but *Reformation*."

Amongst other annoyances, Elliston was also a party (plaintiff) in an action about to be tried in the Court of Common Pleas—Himself *v.* Webster—the defendant having deserted Drury Lane for Birmingham. Many of the actors were served with "subpœnas," and were consequently in attendance at Westminster, expecting the cause to be called on. A new piece being at this time on the eve of representation at the theatre, several of the scenes were actually rehearsed in the passages, lobbies, and waiting-rooms of Westminster Hall.

At a period when the proprietor of the English Opera House was struggling to establish himself, though violently opposed by his powerful rivals, the excellent kind-hearted Doctor Kitchiner, in his extreme good-nature, imagined that he had found the means to settle the disputes of Drury Lane, Covent Garden, Haymarket, and English Opera House.

Doubtless, the worthy Kitchiner, who, at that period was preparing an enlarged edition of his capital work on cookery, thought that, with the aid of his magazine of taste, he might be enabled to

amalgamate the overpowering grandiloquence of Robert William Elliston with the easy and good humoured *nonchalance* of Henry Harris, the subtle and persevering calculations of Samuel James Arnold with the positive plans of David Morris. This was no easy task, but the Doctor imagined if he could get them together, and let them simmer gently, not to boil over, carefully taking off any scum that might arise, that there should not be any disagreeable flavour, stirring gently, and gradually adding wine at discretion, that he should effect his desired object ; he invited therefore, the conflicting parties to dinner, and, by way of settling the differences comfortably, he did not ask any one else to meet them.

When the managers met in the Doctor's drawing-room, their common surprise may be imagined. Harris was somewhat embarrassed on encountering Arnold, but they both had tact enough to understand Kitchiner's well-meant mistake ; but when Elliston arrived, and saw the party, he assumed some exceedingly magnificent airs, quite worthy of the lessee of a principal patent theatre. For a minute or two, an ominous silence reigned, for the worthy Doctor was dumb-founded at, as he apprehended, his failure. Arnold then, at once, adverted to the oddity of the belligerents meeting in that manner, and begged to propose, under the circumstances, there should be a mutual avoidance of all

conversation on theatrical affairs. This was immediately agreed to, much to the mortification of Doctor Kitchiner, who had predetermined that all animosities should be settled, that night, at his hospitable board.

The Doctor's dinner, an excellent plain meal, was discussed. It is erroneously supposed that Kitchiner conducted the affairs of his table in a superb style ; on the contrary—he would give soup, fish, poultry, roasts, vegetables, a pudding and tart—all dressed as accurately as it was possible to put them on the table ; but he did not trouble his party with what are called “ made dishes ;” your relays of plates, knives, and forks, were, at once placed before each guest ; the candles were affixed in low flat candlesticks, that every one might see what was in his plate. The Doctor himself invariably kept his own individual tankard of malt, underneath his chair. When the cloth was withdrawn, Kitchiner, who was loyal to the chine, generally volunteered to sing “ God save the King,” which he executed with graces and effects peculiarly his own.

The wine circulated briskly ; theatrical managers, generally speaking, are not abstemious, and the Doctor's wine was, according to his received notions of that which he considered correct, always able-bodied. “ You drink wine,” said he ; “ to exhilarate you : and the most potent draught better

accomplishes this purpose: if your object is to get drunk, the sooner you are so, the better."

The Doctor endeavoured occasionally to introduce the subject of the theatrical disputes; but Harris and Arnold immediately changed the conversation at the very moment Elliston was about to reply at full length with becoming importance; and thus all hostile allusions were avoided, until, at a later period of the evening, a certain tipsiness having crossed Elliston's brain, he saw his patent dignity double. He suddenly arose, and walking majestically between Harris and Arnold, he placed a hand on each of their shoulders, and sententiously pronounced, "Harris—Arnold! I will crush you!—the plough shall pass over your possessions, and in twelve months you will be forgotten."

One morning a tap at the door of Elliston's private room, in the theatre, announced a stranger, and the messenger introduced a "French gentleman," desirous of an interview with the manager.

"A French gentleman!" responded Elliston—"pray admit him," which he had scarcely uttered, when a little deformed being—a kind of apode (for neither feet nor legs were discernible), but with arms almost measuring the body's length, vaulted into the apartment, and, making two entire somersets, sprang first on the writing-desk and thence to the roof of a neighbouring book-case; from which

situation he sat grinning at the bewildered manager. Elliston, who had lately been subject to a little mental wandering, began to suspect the state of his own senses ; but when he perceived his trusty door-keeper in even greater consternation than himself, he was convinced the scene before him was no illusion ; and, drawing himself up in that air of majesty, so peculiar to him, demanded to what purpose he was indebted for the visit of so distinguished a foreigner ?

A squeak in the key of *Polichinello*, and another *pirouette* from the summit of the book-case, were all the reply the interrogation received ; when Elliston was not long in discovering his visitor was a candidate for dramatic honours. This person was a M. Gouffe, the celebrated baboon ; one who had shaken off his humanity, in which he had hitherto starved, and taken up the beast for a livelihood :

“ *Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia nobis !* ”

But Elliston being unwilling the prophecy should be yet fulfilled, when the stage should be reduced to a degradation far more ignoble than its earliest origin, was by no means inclined to treat the little wretch with caresses, but to serve him as the father did his atheistical son, who, declaring his religious opinion to be that he “ should die like a dog.” “ Then, by my honour, you shall live like one ”—and so kicked him down stairs. To evade this, however,

in the present instance, the little imp, after one or two further evidences of luxation at will, made his final *pirouette*; convinced that one good turn deserves another, and sprang out of the room as nimbly as he had entered it.

Harley returned about this time to his duties at Drury Lane Theatre, having been absent a brief holiday on a provincial tour. In good spirits and full of health, the favourite was welcomed by his brethren, and warmly greeted by the public. Harley had the luck of adventure wherever he went; and as he had also the faculty of narrating the incidents with considerable gusto, his return was always a matter of lively congratulation amongst his friends, and the Harleian Miscellanies in great request.

He had just arrived from Dover, where "the business" had been unprofitable to the actors, and disastrous enough to the local manager.

On a certain "non-play" morning, one of the actors, in his stroll (to all intents and purposes a "walking gentleman") on the London road, was accosted by the Dover carrier, pursuing his way into the town, who, pulling up his horse, demanded if young *Doricourt* had a mind to purchase a pair of nankeen small-clothes?

"A pair of nankeen small-clothes!" repeated the actor, in a merry vein.

"Ay, master," responded the carrier, untying

a brown paper parcel; "they will just fit you—you're but a lean 'un—and shall have 'em for half a crown."

The actor, not a little amused by the rencontre, was strongly tempted by the offer; for the small-clothes in question were of the best light comedy fashion, and perfectly new; the only hesitation he had to the purchase being that he was possessed but of five shillings in the world, and the theatrical prospects for the ensuing week as gloomy as Cow Cross in November.

Having, however, turned the articles in and out sundry times by the road-side, and compared the dimensions with his own length of limb, it was arranged, that if the nankeens fitted, the half-crown should be forthcoming. For this purpose, the chapman retired to a neighbouring field, where, behind a hay-rick, the habiliments were duly tried by the strolling gentleman.

The "light comedies" fitted admirably, neither too tight nor too loose, and with an alacrity, which quite startled the vendor, the half-crown was paid down, when away he went, not without some regret that he had not demanded three shillings for the purchase. No sooner, however, was the carrier once more on his journey, than a brother Thespian, passing the same road, happened to spy our hero in his new attire, and saluting him with the hail fellowship of a needy brother, demanded the history of his smart summer gear.

“ All in good time, my fine fellow,” was the reply ; “ but for the present,” continued he, “ you shall remain here and dine with me.”

“ Dine with you !” repeated the other in a tone of astonishment.

“ Yes—a roast fowl, bacon, and a bottle of as good port as my friend “Double-chalk” can supply us.”

Without waiting for a reply, young *Doricourt* mounted the stairs of the Black Lion, and having summoned up the landlord, ordered the dinner immediately to be cooked, and the wine to be decanted with special care.

Our new friend looked on with astonishment, which had almost amounted to apprehension that his brother actor had suddenly lost the only estate by which he lived, namely—his wits. In due time, dinner was supplied—the fowl, the bacon, the port—all excellent, or at least highly relished by the two companions, whose gala days had scarcely exceeded a dripping in the pan.

Our invited guest now looked still more anxiously for some explanation, but young *Doricourt* only pulled up his small-clothes and called for another bottle of port.

By this time the consternation of his friend was at its height. What was to be the result he knew not, and the only consolation he felt, was in knowing the landlord had been witness to his invitation,

and that the affair was wholly his friend's look-out.

The second bottle being now pretty well discussed, the invited guest gave sundry side-long glances at the door; for a timely escape was positively the question which now alone occupied his thoughts.

"A tolerable house this," cried the entertainer, carelessly, "for a road-side inn; and now let us have up 'Doublechalk,' for we must pay the bill."

"We!" responded his friend, aghast, "as Heaven's my judge, I'm not worth a shilling!"

The comical look of dismay, with which he uttered these words, was verily too much for the gravity of our nankeen hero, who burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter. He then began to relate the history of the small-clothes, which the reader is already acquainted with, and concluded by saying, "I was no sooner equipped, than, on stooping, I felt something extremely hard and uncomfortable about the right-knee, when, loosening the lining, out fell——"

"What?"

"A couple of guineas, my fine fellow! God knows whose property, but not my friend the huckster's, who came into possession of the misfit! and you and I are as much entitled to them as any one else."

"Doublechalk" now made his appearance; one of the pieces was speedily changed into paler coin,

and off went the two comedians, as happy a pair as any in the county.

Harley had also been in Essex during this period of his absence. Arriving one evening at Colchester, where he intended to pass the night, he proceeded to the coffee-room of the inn, where, having supped, not quite to his satisfaction, (for neither plates nor knives being over clean, might have led to some suspicions in respect of cookery,) he requested to be shown to his bed-room. It was now about a quarter to eleven o'clock.

"The chambermaid directly, sir," responded the waiter, as he placed a rummer of Hollands and water before our son of Mirth, into which he flung a spoon, which he had just taken from the empty tumbler of some departed guest.

"Just extricate the greater number of these flies before you go," observed Harley, as he held up a small wine-glass, containing three knobs of stained lump-sugar.

The waiter having done precisely as he was bidden, (for he still left two dead bodies at the bottom of the vessel,) retired.

Appetite having already been taken away, without hunger being satisfied, Harley stirred his poison, and with a calmness which would have become Socrates himself, tasted the liquor. This was enough. Having waited some twenty minutes longer, our traveller again rang the bell.

"My bed-room," exclaimed Harley, in a more peremptory tone than was his custom.

"The chamber-maid directly, sir," again replied the attendant, placing the "Ipswich Gazette" before his guest, and away he ran.

Harley turned patiently to the "County News," but the yolk of egg, together with sundry beer stains, having soon interrupted the progress of his studies, he threw down the sheet, not without certain misgivings of the one he was about to turn into. Another twenty minutes had elapsed.

"This is not to be endured," cried the angry comedian, and he rang the bell with violence. "The chamber-maid, waiter!—your inattention is unpardonable."

"Directly, sir," responded the slipshod serving man, as he handed to our friend a thick octavo—"Patterson's Roads"—with but one cover.

"My road is to bed—bed, I say!" vociferated Harley; but the waiter was off again.

Ten minutes more had elapsed, during which Harley, with his hands thrust into his pockets, had been pacing the coffee-room, in strides which might presently have brought him into a neighbouring county, when, seizing "Patterson's Roads," he hurled it violently on the ground, and off flew the other cover.

"Chamber-maid—chamber-maid!" roared Harley, when in came the "Boots."

"Send the waiter, you rascal."

"Directly, sir," replied the man, when, stooping down, he placed the boot-jack at the comedian's feet.

Here our friend lost all patience, and kicking over the "Boots," as he was curled up, like a woodlouse, Harley again rushed to the bell, and pulled it with a violence which actually did him good.

The waiter again appeared.

"Well, sir," demanded Harley, attempting calmness and dignity, "when am I to see my chamber?"

"Why, sir," responded the man, in an apologetic and confidential tone of humility, "Long Tom, the guard, is just getting up—the mail will be here in ten minutes—and Tom's bed directly at your service."

Poor Harley could hear no more; the bill was called for—the supper and Hollands paid for—wherein, if there had been any deficiency, it was amply made up by the charges; and, having once more put on his great coat, was ready to start with "Long Tom" on the first stage to London.

Knight, on taking his benefit this season, obtained the assistance of Kean and Young. Knight was remarkable for a preciseness—a formality of manner which, though occasionally amusing enough to a by-stander, was yet annoying to those who might be the immediate objects of his address.

On the morning after his benefit, the comedian waited on Kean with twenty guineas in his hand, but with a set and formal speech in his mouth, from which he promised himself no slight advantage. The words he delivered with true emphasis, and, we may add, discretion, in which every term which adulation might demand was duly employed. Knight then tendered his twenty guineas, which the o'erweened tragedian refused accepting, and away trotted the delighted Knight with the identical guineas and speech, to make the identical experiment with Young. Having delivered his address, as formally as a parish clerk gives out a hymn, Knight began languidly to count down his money—a mere matter of form, as he deemed—but perceiving Young inclined to consider “Knight service” not quite as a dead letter, but was really about to draw the tender into the vortex of his pocket, the agitated comedian, in faltering accents, announced that Mr. Kean had refused—refused, he repeated—a similar amount, only two hours before.

“And that is precisely our contract in this theatre, Mr. Knight,” responded the tragedian; “Mr. Kean has here the choice of parts, and what he refuses, I have undertaken to accept; he has had his election in the present case, and I am *compelled* to bag the money.”

The annual meeting of the proprietors took place on the 6th of July, 1823. The chairman said it was

impossible to withhold his warm commendation from Mr. Elliston, for the great punctuality which had been observed in the discharge of his contract ; for not only had he paid the rental stipulated, to the last farthing, but he had actually trebled the sum which he had undertaken to lay out, in the improvement and embellishment of the house : the sum agreed upon was 6000*l.*, he had spent upwards of 18,000*l.* The company had been strengthened, the house contracted and beautified in a manner to excite unqualified admiration, and the value of the property was hourly increasing by his management.

These and the previous encomiums so justly bestowed on the lessee, should be borne in the recollection of the reader, when he arrives at the summer of 1826.

For the season, 1823-4, Bunn was engaged at Drury Lane Theatre, as stage-director ; but quitted it before the time of his agreement had expired. As *director*, he was scarcely long enough in the theatre to display the full extent of his powers of management, but, as “ *conductor*,” a more powerful one to the electric fluid of Robert William’s temperament, could not have been selected. After sundry scenes of this kind of experimental philosophy, the bodies separated.

Reynolds was also engaged for this season at Drury Lane. When asked by Boaden why he had

given that establishment the preference to Covent Garden ; “ Because,” said he, “ at the latter place there are four madmen, whilst at Drury Lane there is but one.”

PROPOSAL.

“ For Mr. Elliston’s sake, as well as my own, my *sine qua non* is never to be called upon at the theatre, or elsewhere, for personal attendance. I believe Mr. Moore has explained this ; however, it is necessary to repeat it, and to add, that for many years I held a situation at Covent Garden, and it was thought, from obvious reasons, better I should not appear in the theatre, or in any way be supposed to interfere in the management. I only wish to be employed as agent, and to do my duty, loyally and faithfully, in Warren-street.

“ I will read all the plays Mr. Elliston sends me ; and those that are worthless I will save him the trouble of looking over. Where a dramatic piece has any promise I will suggest alterations ; see the author, and labour to help him and the theatre. In this part of my office I may say I have been very fortunate at Covent Garden Theatre.

“ All new, untried performers (as usual) I will hear rehearse, and immediately give Mr. Elliston my opinion, for him to dismiss, or accept them. If he think an agent can bargain better with them, than a principal, I shall be happy (under his sanction) to make their engagements.

"As to pantomime, aided, as I certainly shall be, by a gentleman who has been unprecedentedly successful in this line, I think I can positively secure Mr. Elliston a good one for Christmas, at least I trust the plan he will think good—the execution we cannot answer for; however, we will all try not to sing—

‘I trusted to the carpenter and the inconstant wind.’

As Thinker—here is my best chance of serving Drury Lane. It is a wild town, and nothing but a wild thought can rouse their apathetical tendencies. I shall not be like Lord Thurlow, who, as, Pitt said, ‘opposed everything, and proposed nothing.’ I *shall propose*, and I have no doubt Mr. Elliston will see the necessity of opposing many of my drives at the dormant animal.

“At any rate I hope, one way or other, my services will be worth what I propose, 1*l.* per night, which, I believe, is the amount of a salary of 7*l.* a-week for two hundred nights. If this be objected to, there is no harm done; and Mr. Elliston and I part on excellent terms, as we did last year.

“F. REYNOLDS.”

On the 1st of October, the season commenced, on which occasion a new sketch was produced, under the title, “Stella Leatherlungs,” for the special purpose of bringing into operation the ver-

satility of Miss Clara Fisher. The author's name was for a time concealed, and it had been well for his reputation had the disclosure never been made; for the affair was altogether unworthy George Colman, and was rendered still more discreditable to him, as he had only a short time before disclaimed all intention of writing for “ the precocious little lady.” It will be curious to observe the nightly family free admissions, during Miss Clara Fisher's engagement: — “ Mr. John Fisher, Mr. Charles Fisher; Miss Jane Fisher, Miss Caroline Fisher, Miss Amelia Fisher, Miss Clara Fisher, Mrs. Fisher, and Mr. Fisher, and three double orders for those nights on which Miss Clara Fisher performs.” Alas, poor manager !

On the 14th of October, Macready made his first appearance, at Drury Lane Theatre, in the character of *Virginius*. His reception was highly flattering, and throughout the whole of his engagement his attraction was greatly beneficial to the treasury. “ Caius Gracchus,” a play by Sheridan Knowles, written expressly for Macready's powers, was also produced in this season; but its acting duration was but seven nights.

“ The Cataract of the Ganges,” a successful melo-drame, was a considerable half-price attraction of this season—the horses “ drawing,” and the cataract causing the “ overflow.” This seems not to

have been the first attempt of the kind at Drury Lane. Garrick, in an epilogue, writes—

"And thirsty Islington laments in vain,
Half her new river rolled to Drury-lane."

Kean's intrigue with Mrs. Cox having become "The common chat of gossips when they meet," the Alderman, her husband, felt it was also becoming necessary he should know something about the matter himself.

The last in the secret of an *amourette*, we know, by a kind of prescriptive claim, has long been, the frail one's partner; but this statute of limitations to Cox's ignorance appearing now upon the moral "pleas," the Alderman, who had been for some little time before, rehearsing the burst of indignation which he intended to portray at the hour of his fatal knowledge, now exhibited himself in this most striking position.

The 7th of April was the day fixed on for the annual dinner at the Freemasons' Hall, in aid of the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund. Kean, as "master," was waiting the arrival of the royal chairman in the appointed committee-room, when Alderman Cox presented himself at the entrance, and with becoming violence demanded instant admission to the presence of his wrong-doer. Having declared the hostility of his intention, he was, of course, withheld by the peace-making bystanders; the whole

of which events coming within the said "intention," the piece (to use a dramatic phrase) was going uncommonly well.

Kean being now apprised of what was proceeding without, drew from under his coat a pistol; for it is not to be supposed the friends of Cox had been idle in carrying his threats to the ears of the sinning tragedian. The upshot is clear enough—Cox was restrained and carried off by main violence, and rendered perfectly harmless, but he had acquitted himself well in the part it was necessary for him to act; and recollecting, perhaps, that Cæsar, Pompey, Antony, and Cato, had been pretty well in the same predicament, he now calmly retired—perhaps to peruse the old dramatists—and doubtless the poet who tells him—

"To be betray'd is natural
To a married man, as to eat, sleep,
Or wear a night-cap. Friends! I would rather
Trust mine arm in the throat of a lion,
My purse with a courtesan, my neck with
The chance of a die, or my religion
In a synagogue of Jews, than my wife
With a friend."—*Ford's "Love's Sacrifice."*

CHAPTER XII.

Kean missing—Plot and counterplot—An angry letter—Joseph Shepherd Munden—Some account of him—Characteristic Anecdote—History of a miniature—George Colman to Joseph Munden—Mr. Thomas Moore—Mr. Frederick Reynolds—Play-bill war—"Patent seasons!"—Theatrical hostilities—Armed paragraphs—King and Queen of the Sandwich Isles—Ducrow's horses—Mr. Thomas Wooler—A humorous epistle—Another!—A furious fanatic—Threatening letters—Madame Catalani—£9 6s—Anecdote of Haydn and Mrs. Billington—Sir Charles Morgan—Lady Morgan's letter—Mr. Braham—Der Freischutz—Its history.

KEAN having been absent from the theatre for several days, on alleged illness, a messenger was despatched to Clarges-street, to learn the true state of his health; when he was informed that Mr. Kean had quitted London, having left no address nor any indication of his place of retirement. No sooner, however, had the commissioner turned from the house, than the actor's trusty door-keeper communicated with his master, who was at this very time at the Regent Hotel, Brighton; a fact which Elliston soon after discovering, addressed a letter to him accordingly. This letter was returned to Elliston by the next post under cover, from the equally trusty landlord of the "Regent," announcing that

Mr. Kean had certainly been his inmate, but had set sail from Newhaven two days before for Dieppe.

A friend of the Drury lessee was now deputed to start for Brighton, and ascertain more particularly the movements of the wayward tragedian, as his presence in London had become of the greatest importance ; Kean having been publicly announced to act on the following week, at Drury Lane, with Macready.

On the arrival of this confidential friend at Brighton, he had immediate interview with mine host of the " Regent," but could gain no additional particulars respecting the flitting meteor, than that he was probably at Dieppe, where he had intended to remain quiet, during a few weeks, for the restoration of his health. At this moment, confused sounds of merriment, evidently of a high convivial character, assailed the ears of our suspicious interrogator, and from certain accents, which he more distinctly caught, he felt convinced he had recognised the roysterer, and that Kean was at this very moment in the house. Judiciously keeping these " thick coming fancies" to himself, our wily emissary appeared satisfied, observing only that, as he could gain no further intelligence of Mr. Kean, he was anxious to return to London by that night's mail.

The tactician now quitted the house, but felt something more was to be done, before he took

verily his departure from this invigorating watering-place. Within a short time he found an agent, who appeared willing and equal to his enterprise ; and having instructed him in the part he was to play, the man was forthwith put into action.

It was arranged that this person should go to the "Regent"—declare himself to the landlord, both by manner and words, thoroughly in the secret of Kean's being still in Brighton—to affect extreme caution, and to beg a note, which was of course prepared should be put instantly into his hands.

"Double-score" was now completely outwitted—the look of roguish freemasonry, which the man assumed on reaching the hotel, was at once responded to by the fraternal ken of our host, who, first treating the messenger with a mug of his best beer, received the note, and, with a confidential whisper, declared the little document should be delivered within five minutes. The note in question enclosed a card with these words—

"Mr. Elliston, with friendly inquiries after the health of Mr. Kean !"

On the second day from this event, Elliston received the following letter, dated Brighton :

"ELLISTON,—I hate a trickster : you have employed unworthy means to disturb me in my solitude. This was neither manly nor open. It was necessary I should have repose—my health has suffered mate-

rially. Elliston, I must not be spoken to; you know what I am equal to when in vigour; but remember also,

"Ad nullum consurgit opus cum corpore languet."

You have pursued me by a trick, and I should deign you no reply; but I am here, sir, under the direction of Sir Anthony Carlisle, and will not stir from this place until I have gone through all the routine of medicine and sea-bathing, prescribed for me by that great man. The medical gentlemen of Brighton declare also I need repose—on that question there is no dissentient voice: "Kean must have repose." If I am pursued, either by tricks or openly, I shall retire to "La belle France," for some weeks.

"I leave you in no distress—you have Macready! Macready, Elliston!—why should you be anxious about poor Kean? Yet, a breath—a breath, I say, of Kean shall confound a generation of Youngs and Macreadys. I am, E. KEAN."

Well, Kean was to have repose; and if he took it, certainly it was after no man's fashion but his own. For two nights, it was ascertained, he had not been in bed at all, but then, for two nights and as many days to boot, he was not out of it; so that the sum of his rest might possibly have been the repose that "great man," Sir Anthony Carlisle, had prescribed, and the faculty of Brighton ap-

proved. There was, at least, one person of whose approbation there could be no doubt, and that was the landlord of the "Regent," who perfectly assented to the repose Kean was taking, whilst his hotel was rendered the most profitable *sanatorium* ever entered by a valetudinarian.

But Kean's real malady, the reader, before this, has, peradventure, discovered : the "Young fever" was now succeeded by the "Macready jaundice ;" and as the day approached for his appearance in the part of *Hastings*, although Macready had consented to the inferior undertaking of *Dumont*, "the first tragic actor" discovered that he wanted repose, and was unequal to professional exertion. Kean did not return to Drury Lane this season.

On the 31st of May, Munden took his farewell benefit at Drury Lane, in the parts of *Sir Robert Bramble* and *Dosy*.

Joseph Shepherd Munden was the son of a poulterer in Brook's Market, Holborn, where he was born in 1758 ; in February, 1778, he made his earliest theatrical attempt at one of the private benefits which, at that time, were so common at the Haymarket Theatre, in the farce of the "Irish Widow," for a Mrs. Massey. The play was "Jane Shore," in which George Cooke acted.

Munden made his first public appearance at Covent Garden, on the 2nd of December, 1790, in *Sir Francis Gripe* and *Jemmy Jumps*. Quick was a

great favourite in *Sir Francis Gripe*; and *Jemmy Jumps* was a part in which the inimitable Edwin was considered to be unrivalled. Munden's attempt, therefore, was a bold one—but he succeeded. Prejudice, however, was so strong, that he did not make any great way; the friends of both Quick and Edwin being busily in arms against him. Anthony Pasquin also thus clumsily lampoons him :—

“Have you seen the *great* Munden in *Gripe*, and in *Jumps*,
 Roared Tom, by solicitude fed !
 I have, and by George, they both give me the dumps,
 For they're neither the *Quick*, nor the dead.”

Towards the latter end of his second season, it was intimated to Munden that his services would be dispensed with at its close; “The Road to Ruin” was at that time in preparation. Quick had rehearsed *Old Dornton* more than a dozen times, but by no means affecting the part, he begged to be relieved from it altogether. Harris had no opinion of the comedy itself, and carelessly gave to Munden the part of *Old Dornton*, and Quick took *Silky*, which the former had previously rehearsed. With but four days' study, Munden was ready; from that moment, he was completely established, and re-engaged at an increased salary.

Sir Robert Bramble, in the “Poor Gentleman,” and *Dosy*, in “Past Ten o’Clock,” were the parts which this celebrated actor selected for his farewell benefit; and it was announced that, in the course of the evening, *Mr. Munden would at-*

tempt to take leave of his friends and the public." The audience were exceedingly numerous, and manifested throughout, their warm sentiments of regard for one of the most highly-gifted comedians that ever trod the stage.

Munden played on this interesting night with his wonted feeling and energy, but the excitement of the occasion, and a little fermented indulgence, completely overcame him, before he was *functus officio* with the audience. At the conclusion of the play, he approached the lamps for the purpose of delivering an address—a poetical “*vale*,” written expressly by Mr. Talfourd. Poor Munden faltered very early, both in metre and matter; when, deliberately pulling out his spectacles, he commenced reading a production, the spirit of which was, the spontaneous outpourings of gratitude and affection. This little *mal-à-droit* proceeding somewhat perplexed the sentiment of the night; but as the “veteran comedian” made his final bow, there was not a single person of taste or intelligence present, who did not feel the stage had that night lost one of the most brilliant comedians that had ever adorned it.

Munden’s eccentricities, and amongst them a tendency to parsimony, are well known; and we may be, therefore, held excused for relating the following little amusing trait of his besetting *foiblesse*.

Munden, not very many years before his retire-

ment, fancied himself in love; the object of his sly passion being a country actress. The *rôle* of a lover on the stage of life is always, more or less, an expensive part to play—a feature as unpalatable to our friend, Joe Munden, as to any perhaps who had ever stepped forward in the character. Amongst other things, he announced to his mistress, that he was anxious to possess her likeness, in the form of a miniature, and requested she would make him happy, by giving his friend, the limner, a sitting. The lady consented. The sitting, a single one, took place; and at the end of the week, the doting admirer produced the small oval “counterfeit.”

But the history of the portrait was this: Munden had had in his possession, time out of mind, a little old miniature of some obsolete relation of his own, in the costume of the year '45, and bore all concomitant marks about it, to boot, of that period. This miniature was liberated from its thin wiry frame, and put into the hands of his young friend, the artist,—“just to alter the features,” as poor Joe observed, to resemble the lady who would sit to him. This order was given in confidence, and duly executed.

The article being now replaced in its fragile frame, and brushed up a bit with the finger of an old glove, Munden carries it, in topping ecstasy, to his lady-love.

“ See !” cried he, “ here it is ! and what a likeness ! My friend is a genius, I assure you—only one sitting ! and see how perfect !—what a likeness ! I declare. The old costume,” added he, cunningly, “ is more picturesque than the silly attire of the present day, so I have had you painted as one of the beauties of the court of George the Second.” Munden died in February, 1832.

Munden, unrivalled as he was in his art, and certainly an amusing companion, was no great favourite with the managers. He was jealous of the fame of his brethren, and so difficult to please in respect of parts placed in his hands, that unless he had all the cream of the play, he would hardly approach the banquet. Both Colman and Harris found him an impracticable servant ; and we submit a letter addressed to him by the former, in the year 1812—a very temperate statement, yet proving clearly the facts to which we have alluded :

“ 4th November, 1812.

4, Melina Place, West. Road.

“ SIR,—I should have answered your favour of the 25th of last month sooner, but, sitting down to write anything unpleasant to your feelings, is so unpleasant a task imposed upon my own, that I have, from day to day postponed it.

“ I cannot bring to my recollection a promise, on

my part, on the renewal of your engagement, that you should not perform the character you originally played, in the "Quadrupeds of Quedlingburgh;" but in the endeavour to refresh my memory, it has occurred to me, that there could not be any *renewal of engagement at all*; for, when you joined me, in the year 1811, it was understood between us, that one great advantage the Haymarket would receive from your assistance was, that you were to be there *exclusively* for the whole of the next season, 1812; and I conceived you to be engaged (the conception I presume was mutual) for the whole of such term. This was before the piece in question *was written*! Could you stipulate about the character when we first met and agreed? The part was not in existence. It could not be on the renewal of our engagement, for there was virtually no renewal.

"But at the end of the first season we certainly had a conversation. It appeared to me to turn on points of little alleged grievances which you had suffered; on which, I confess, you seemed to lay greater stress than they deserved; for one hardship, I remember, on which you particularly dwelt was, that the stage-manager had not sufficiently exerted himself among the locksmiths, in seeing a padlock affixed to your dressing-box. Perhaps, with the padlock, *Casimere* might have been mentioned by you; but (thinking it far from momentous) I did not clap *Casimere*, any more

than the padlock, in my mind ; and it is probable I answered, in general terms, that I would do all in my power to meet your wishes, and to make you comfortable in the theatre. This has been always my principle towards you. But when you assure me you are ready to make an *affidavit* on the subject, I have little further to say than that, my memory must have been treacherous, although you told me you had made an *oath* not to act *Lancelot Gobbo*, and afterwards sent me word you would perform it once again, because I had asked you to *oblige me* by so doing. I think, however, you never happened to perform it again ; and I was wrong (in my official capacity) to *solicit* you. Still I have to impress a due sense of your very complimentary message, to inform me that you would, for once, sacrifice your asseveration to your Maker, to the wishes of your manager.

“ Your determination, I must say, of rejecting the above character, was as unjust in every point of view, as your language in regard to the company of performers was detracting ; and your remonstrance to me (you may remember the moment you took) was ill-timed. This was the only very disagreeable interview I ever had with you—I cannot call it dispute, and scarcely conversation ; for, except my asking you, as a *favour*, to do your *duty*, you had the whole talk to yourself, and sufficiently violent on your side it was. Now this alone might have

borne me out in any step which the regulations of the theatre justify, in exacting a mulct, of which you now complain; but were I to enumerate the frequent instances in which you have thrown the theatre into distress and confusion, during its last season, my letter, which is already lengthy, would exceed all bounds. The very name of *forfeiture* is as odious to me as it can be to you, or any performer; and to prove to you I only exacted it as a salutary proceeding towards one who should have shewn a better example than to render others contumacious, I am very willing to remit the fine, (which might have been exacted with strict justice on several occasions,) as far as my voice may bear any weight in my partnership.

“I highly respect your histrionic capacity; but, had you twenty times your abilities, I would rather, in future, deal with men of minor talent, than with one who is so impracticable, and who, in the expression of his sentiments, within the very walls of the theatre where he is engaged, so far forgets all observance of common order and propriety.

“I am, sir, your obedient humble servant.

“GEORGE COLMAN.”

“To Joseph Munden, Esq.”

Mr. Thomas Moore writes to the manager as follows :

“ Monday Morning.

“ DEAR SIR,—I presumed so far upon the acquaintance which I have been lucky enough to form with you, to write you a letter some weeks ago, recommending to your notice a little girl, about fourteen years of age, of the name of *Dyke*, for whom I wished to procure an engagement in your theatre. As I have never received any answer to my letter, I am rather afraid that it may have miscarried, and I shall feel much obliged, if you will take the trouble of letting me know whether it has ever reached you.

“ I have the honour to be, dear sir,

“ Your very obliged servant,

“ THOMAS MOORE.

“ 27, Bury Street, St. James's.”

At the same time, Elliston receives the following from Mr. Frederick Reynolds :—

“ Boulogne-Sur-Mer, October 4th.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I have delayed writing to you, in the hope I should be able to inform you of my amendment, and my return to my post; but whether the shock I received at seeing my son brought home in a drowned state, has increased my disorder, or that it has increased from other causes, I know not; but this I know, I am rather worse than better; it is true, I go out every day for an hour, and am allowed

wine, as usual; but alas! ‘haerit lateri lethalis arundo’—I fear I shall never recover. Under these circumstances, you will therefore suppose I cannot, for a moment, be of the least service to you: for my own sake, I wish I could—for yours, it is immaterial; but be assured, nothing but decided bad health could induce me to resign a situation which, last year, gave me occupation, profit, and comfort. I know not whether I shall return in a few days, or stay in Boulogne all the winter: but, here or in London, no man will be more anxious to hear of your success than, ever most faithfully yours,

“ F. REYNOLDS.

“ P. S. I have been compelled also to give up Dublin.”

PLAY-BILL WAR.

Arnold, feeling himself greatly aggrieved because Elliston kept Drury Lane Theatre open during the summer, issued the following address to the public on a fly-leaf in the English Opera play-bill. Elliston’s celebrated pamphlet on the reverse side of this very question in 1818, the reader will probably bear in mind.

“ THE WINTER THEATRES.

“ Since the patentees of the WINTER theatres incessantly complain of the encroachments of other theatres, and appeal by *petitions* against those that open under the lord chamberlain’s licences, and by

prosecutions against those that act under the licences of the magistrates, it is time that the attention of the legislature, and of the public, should be called to the gradual encroachments made by these great establishments on their more limited and more defenceless neighbours.

“ In *Garrick's* time, the winter theatres played never more than 150 or 160 nights in the year ; till within the last ten years, they never exceeded an average of 200 nights ; opening in the *middle* of September, and closing *early* in June.

“ They have now gradually extended their performance from the *beginning* of September to towards the *end* of July, leaving only an interval of six or seven weeks, when the town is comparatively empty, (and in the dog days,) for the summer theatres to reap their little scanty harvest.

“ The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, has now reopened in the *middle* of *August*, leaving the summer theatres *twenty-one* nights only, free from an oppressive covetousness, which, it appears, can only be bounded by the ruin of more humble rivals.”

At the bottom of the play-bill was announced—

“ A new *ex-tempore*, temporary sketch will be produced on Monday next, founded on recent encroachments, to be called

“ PATENT SEASONS.”

This appendant to the *affiche*, aroused at once the ire of Robert William, duke of Drury Lane. Per-

haps he was a little sensitive on the point of ridicule, but most certainly the feeling of supreme dignity floated across his brain. We can, at this moment, see the triumphant glance he must have thrown at Russell, Winston, and Moncrieff, (his cabinet council) when, with a very unsteady hand, he penned and exhibited the following unparalleled effusion, which appeared in the Drury Lane play-bill of August 18th, 1820, in conspicuous type :—

“THIS THEATRE OVERFLOWS EVERY NIGHT.

“ The patentees cannot condescend to enter into a competition of scurrility, which is only fitted for *minor* theatres. What their powers really are, will be without any public appeal, legally decided in November next, and any gasconade can only be supposed to be caused by cunning or penury !”

This was a masterpiece—an annihilator. Oh, the wicked twinkle of the grey eye, when the paragraph was brought back by the printer’s devil for inspection ; and when, in the interim, sundry potations of brandy and water had been discussed ! Elliston had completely settled the English Opera manager in the estimation of the public.

The temporary sketch, (written in one night, *after* it had been announced for production by J. H. Reynolds and R. B. Peake,) was successful, and received by the audience with much laughter. It

had many "palpable hits," and was played a dozen evenings, with the annexed puff at the bottom of the bill:—

"The new farce of PATENT SEASONS, in spite of the *winter* encroachments, having been received by a *summer* audience with *autumnal* warmth, will be repeated every evening; and would doubtless continue its 'TRIUMPHANT CAREER' until next *spring*, were the proprietor so fortunate as to extend, (by a patent season) his term of *summer* performance from one year's end to the other."

Arnold reprinted Elliston's pithy paragraph in the English Opera bill, with the subjoined remarks:—

"The proprietor of the English Opera House is anxious to afford publicity to the *convincing* answer of the lessee of Drury Lane Theatre. The public will judge to whom the charge of '*scurrility*' attaches. As to '*competition*' in the practice of it, there can be none; for the proprietor of the English Opera House at once yields the palm (after the foregoing specimen) to the lessee of the MAJOR theatre."

Elliston was too experienced a stager to carry this matter any further, or to own a defeat, though he evidently was beaten. There was one circumstance of which he was aware, that so long as he kept Drury Lane Theatre open, it might happen that no profit would accrue; but it had the effect of crippling the receipts of the English Opera House and the Haymarket.

His Majesty having ordered his own box to be prepared for the royal strangers, "The King and Queen of the Sandwich Islands," the illustrious Indians made their appearance at the theatre on the 4th of June. The serious parts of the night's entertainments seemed particularly to excite their risible nerves, whereas the broad farce elongated their visages to every indication of woe. The affair therefore to them was just as "broad as it was long ;" so that, true to the nature of our antipodes, they had their day and night precisely at opposite seasons to our own.

A new piece entitled "The Enchanted Courser," written by Croly, was at this time in rehearsal at Drury Lane, for which Elliston had engaged Ducrow's stud of horses. On the day appointed, the truly magnificent stud in question, was in readiness on the stage, but no Ducrow ! Elliston was, naturally enough, chagrined at this disappointment, as nothing could be done with the horses in the absence of their master, and the day was at hand for the representation of the piece. A rehearsal was, of course, called for the next morning, when precisely the same occurrence took place—the horses ready, but no Ducrow ! Elliston now despatched a note to the truant equestrian, begging his instant attendance, and within an hour Ducrow was at the theatre.

"What, Mr. Ducrow, is the meaning of this ?"

demanded the angry lessee; "neither yesterday nor to-day—without the slightest explanation!"

"Anan! Mis t'Elliston" — was the only reply.

"Why, sir, have you not been here to your engagement?"

"'Gagement, Mis t'Elliston—I've no 'gagement—there's the osses—punctual creaturs."

Elliston at once saw he had been jockeyed. The Newmarket Club would have given the verdict against him. In vain he pleaded—unconvincing was his eloquence; unavailing his indignation. He had the bow of Ulysses, but the arm of the mighty archer was wanting; for the stud of horses was at this moment about as useless, without the aid of Ducrow, as a conjuror's dog away from his keeper. "The Enchanted Courser" was emphatically at a stand; through Ducrow alone, the disenchantment could be effected, and at 5*l.* extra per week, he now agreed to superintend the rehearsals.

"The Enchanted Courser" was produced in October, which, though looked on as the best running horse of the season, proved in the race but a mere outsider, and not worth the entering.

Amongst Elliston's numerous correspondents, appears Mr. Thomas Wooller, whose inquisitive mind not merely directed to the political and social interests of his countrymen, makes an occasional

excursion into the fields of literature and art. We give an example of his eccentric trip into the territories of Drury Lane, and must confess him an amusing traveller :

“ Gough Square, Fleet Street, November 2nd, 1824.

“ SIR,—I hold myself so greatly indebted to Old Drury, and indeed yourself, for so much past pleasure that I cannot refrain from offering you a hint, which I fancy may be useful to you. To be brief—you have engaged these horses: there is a class of persons, once on horseback, will ride to the devil; of that exigent denomination, I believe you are not one: yet you may find yourself a good way on this gloomy journey, unless you take timely advice. You have got these horses and must use them—consider then, how to put the saddle on the best occasion.

“ Your new piece of *sorcery*, which was certainly not devised by a conjuror, will greatly injure the reputation these four-footed actors have acquired in another place; and out of respect to their abilities, now they are at Drury Lane, they should appear in consistent characters. The dramatist, your friend, cannot do them justice, nor, looking to their great merits, do I think any of your playwrights can. We must turn back to our forefathers in dramatic literature. What think you of mounting Shakspeare's heroes, as the bard himself

would rejoice they should be. Why not allow the wand of Ducrow to aid the representation of his dramas, as well as the pencil of Stanfield? 'Saddle white Surrey' in good earnest—and, as from 'The Surrey' you once banished these animals, and have taken them up at Drury Lane, think of doing them justice. I fancy your giving up 'the circle' in St. George's Fields, and bringing your stable into a Theatre Royal, a little inconsistent; but no matter, it is done, and reminds me of a friend of mine, who swept away his poultry yard from his little villa at Fulham, and yet kept cocks and hens in Fleet Street.

"But to return. Instead of niggardly furnishing *Richard* and *Richmond* with armies that do not muster the force of a sergeant's guard, give them an efficient force of horse and foot. Shakspeare has greater claims upon you than the "Enchanted Courser," and if I could possibly disenchant your mind from the crooked illusion which is upon it, I should rejoice. Your two-legged actors would be in arms against this project; but disregard their jealousy, and remember that four to two, is two to one in your favour. Richard should march to the field in the full panoply of all your cavalry, and not trudge like a poor pedlar, whom no one would dream of 'interrupting in his expedition.' He might impressively dismount in compliment to the ladies; and when in the field, he cries, 'My kingdom for

a horse," the audience might fairly deem such a price only a fair offer for the recovery of so noble an animal. The audience would like *Hotspur* to manage his 'roan' as well as his lady, and though amongst your spectators there might be, perhaps, a 'grey mare,' yet she would be content that *Hotspur* should be the "better horse" for her night's amusement.

"Think of the thunders which would echo from the vaulted roof of Drury, when "Falstaff" should attempt to mount his cob! for surely he must have ridden, or we should find him even to this day on his road to Coventry.

"I know not whether your great tragedians can ride, but there is, or was, Mr. Fozzard, in Park Lane, who could speedily give them a seat; and should this be not attainable, it would be far better Mr. Ducrow should speak the words of Shakspeare, than no cavalry appear.

"There may be some hypercritics who would tell you there were no horses north of the Tweed in the days of 'Macbeth,' because Shakspeare has fallen into some anachronisms about guns, and so forth. But you must be above all this. Let them ride their own hobbies; but for you, you must mount your horses; and give me leave, sir, to say, there is no one who would become the equestrian order better than yourself; and if, in your beloved red letters, you would only advertise yourself,

‘This present evening, Mr. Elliston, on horse-back,’ the whole world would cry, ‘When next he rides, may I be there to see !’

“ Should you adopt my suggestion, of which I apprehend there can be no doubt, I shall be entitled to a free admission for myself and family. And now ‘*Jockey of Norfolk*,’ farewell !

“ Believe me, with sincere regard, your friend,
“ THOMAS J. WOOLER.”

Some sharp personalities passing about this time between Elliston and certain members of the committee, in the green-room of the theatre, laid the seeds of that bitter hostility of the latter towards the lessee, which now ripened, like an ill weed, and overspread the entire prospect of his future well-doing. The committee consulted their solicitor, whether their tenant, not having paid the sum of 2000*l.* in advance, on the 1st of July, had not forfeited his lease. They were soon satisfied that he had ; and a notice of ejectment was actually in forwardness, when Elliston sent in his cheque for the money, and nothing more was, for the present, heard of legal proceedings.

The following appears to have been a sly hint forwarded to the lessee, on orchestral proceedings. The original was evidently in a feigned hand ; and though some love towards the manager might have suggested this expedient, yet that cloven-footed Self

will peep out ; and the last three lines display it.
We give the letter in its own native language :

“ If the people that receive the most salary neglect the business of the orchestra with impunity, you cannot find fault with those who receive small salaries, should they do the same thing. If you look into the orchestra to-night you will find our first bassoon and clarinet gone to the Philharmonic concert, and others upon the slip every night. So for the sake of eight nights at the Philharmonic, the theatre that employs them nine months is neglected, but they think you cannot do without them, but they are very much mistaken—you do do without them, because they are not there. You need only go to the Cobourg Theatre and you will hear a clarinet and bassoon equal, if not superior, to ours, and a drum-player who would beat ours hollow. They thought you could not do without old Hervey’s oboe ; but we have a man now whose tone is as much superior to Hervey’s as a trumpet to a penny whistle. Sir, go to the Cobourg and hear for yourself—thank God, I never neglected my duty, but there are many who do. From yours with respect,
“ NEVER AWAY.”

A furious fanatic now assailed our hero by the means of anonymous communications, threatening destruction to his theatre, and sudden over-

throw to his whole cohort of sinners, in the language of the letter to Lord Monteagle in the time of our first Stuart, "you shall receive a terrible blow, and yet not see who hurts you."

Repetitions of these threats, though in a feigned hand, yet evidently executed by the same person, induced Elliston to apply for advice to his friend, Sir Richard Birnie, and precautionary measures were accordingly taken. Persons were employed to watch the delivery of letters at the stage-door, for some of these were conveyed through private means, yet no discovery of the perpetrator took place. Destruction to the theatre was threatened by fire, unless the doors were closed against dramatic exhibitions, and anathemas poured upon the head of the ill-starred manager, which at this stage of his increasing mental infirmity, had visible effects on his whole personal demeanour. The recollection that similar threats, in earlier days, had really been carried into effect, by no means tended to allay his disquiet; and though he withheld, in a great measure, the avowal of his fears to those around him, yet to his immediate friend, from whom these facts have been collected, he constantly expressed his misgivings.

From all we can collect, the Glasgow Theatre was set on fire by a party of enthusiasts, and the greater part of the building consumed, about the year 1760. This took place on the night before the arrival of two celebrated actresses, Mrs. George

Anne Bellamy and Miss Wordley, who were to have performed on the ensuing evening. A methodist preacher, who had held forth in that city, told his auditors that he had dreamed he was in the infernal regions at a grand entertainment, where all the domestic devils were in attendance, and that Lucifer gave for a toast, the health of Mr. M——, who had sold the ground on which to build the theatre. The poor enthusiasts hearing this godly information, being themselves inflamed, ran off to communicate a great part of their disease to the playhouse, and actually set it on fire. The wardrobe belonging to the two stars, which had just been deposited within the building, was utterly consumed. As the theatre was situated a mile from the city, the flames did not become visible to the great body of inhabitants, until the incendiaries found means of escape.

Towards the end of June, Elliston offered terms to Madame Catalani, for her brief services. The engagement was concluded, and the speculation, on the whole, turned out profitable to the manager. On the strength of this first experiment, a second was entered into between the parties, and this, on the other hand, was as disastrous to the exchequer of the lessee, as mortifying to the self-esteem of the vocalist.

The plan of engagement, was a sharing scheme, between manager and performer, after a certain sum

had been received at the doors, and, on one occasion, Madame Catalani's dividend amounted to something less than ten pounds.

In pursuance of the lady's request, the nightly receipt was regularly enclosed on the following morning, and carried to her residence in Pall Mall. The sum of 9*l.* 6*s.* was of course so enclosed, but not sealed, and the messenger, as usual, was despatched with the money.

Arriving in Pall Mall, the emissary announced the ignoble amount to Catalani's footman, who was either so ashamed of it, or fearing he might be charged with embezzlement, actually refused to carry it to his mistress. The messenger was therefore compelled himself to proceed up stairs, and produced his money accordingly. Madame Catalani happened, at this moment, to be surrounded by a little circle of visitors, before whom the account stated was produced. This *mal-a-droit* proceeding so thoroughly disconcerted her, that she sang no more at Drury Lane Theatre.

We submit the literal copy of a card, which was invariably transcribed for Madame Catalani, whenever she was called on to sing in "God save the King.*

* After a concert given by this lady, at Liverpool, one of their papers said, "Such was the torrent of sound she emitted at one moment, that the glass globules pendant from the centre chandelier, were powerfully agitated, and struck against each other ! ! !"

Oh Lord avar God
 Arais schaeter
 Is enimis and
 Mece them fol
 Confond tear
 Politekse frosstre
 Thear nevis trix
 On George avar hopes
 We fix God save the
 Kin.

The reader will, perhaps, kindly pardon an old anecdote. When Haydn, the composer, called on Sir J. Reynolds, as he was engaged in painting the portrait of Mrs. Billington. "I like the portrait," said Haydn, "much ; but you have painted Billington listening to angels ; you should rather have made the angels listening to her."

The ill success attending Madame Catalani's second engagement, brought the season somewhat abruptly to a termination. Like Scipio or Lælius, Elliston now sought retirement from the field of strife, and at his favourite Leamington breathed some moments of repose. At this place the Irish bard addresses the manager of Drury :—

" Bowood, Sunday Evening.

" MY DEAR Sir,—I am most flattered and gratified to find that you mean to promote my ' Fire-worshippers ' to the boards of Drury, and only trust that they will not bring another conflagration in their train.

" *Gheber* is pronounced, as you supposed, with the G *hard*. I shall most certainly run up for a peep.

" Yours very truly,

" THOMAS MOORE."

The second letter of Moore is addressed to Lord Holland, in favour of an Irish actor :—

" MY DEAR LORD,—You were kind enough to promise me your interest for an Irish actor, whom I mentioned to you, and who (if he could get rid of one of his country habits) would be, I think, a very useful acquisition to Drury Lane. His fault is too close an imitation of the *spirit* of that great actor, Cooke ; but I am told he has got soberer latterly, though not much.

" Anything you can do for him will oblige

Your, I trust, my faithful
27 Aug 18. Servant
Thomas Moore

" I inclose his statement of characters, &c."

Elliston having formed an acquaintance with Sir Charles Morgan, when the latter had last visited London, now made application to him, that he would use his influence with his lady to induce her

to write a play for Drury Lane. In consequence of which, the manager receives the annexed :—

“ Dublin, 25th Oct. 1824,—35, Kildare Street.

“ DEAR SIR,—Sir Charles Morgan informs me that when he had the pleasure of seeing you in London, last summer, you were kind enough to express a wish that *I* would write something for the stage, and to say that *you* would have pleasure in producing it.

“ I am extremely flattered by your confidence in my talent, and regret that my own pursuits and *principles* of authorship do not lie in a way which *you* (I have no doubt) would render available to us both. In now addressing you, therefore, on the subject of dramatic authorship, I do it on behalf of my sister, Lady Clarke, and not on my own. *She* has a very decided talent for the drama, which, long since, would have brought her both money and fame, if her anxiety and cares for a large and charming family, (all educated under her own eye at home,) had not diverted her attention into a channel to which, perhaps, all the abilities and energies of a woman should be confined.

“ A few years back, Lady Clarke brought out a comedy in the Dublin Theatre, called ‘ The Irish-woman;’ but, notwithstanding its unbounded success here, she withdrew it, (in *utter disgust* at the conduct of the then *proprietor* of the theatre, Mr. Jones,)

after *the ninth night* ! She has since reduced it to a short musical piece, in three acts, with some excellent *characteristic* songs. It at present lies in her desk, but *I believe* she means to give it to Mr. Abbott.

“ She is now occupied on a *musical farce*; her talent for comic song writing is very considerable; and here (in private society) very celebrated. As she is an excellent musician, she has hitherto *adapted* the music herself to all she writes and sings; and the airs are generally old and popular Irish melodies.

“ You will confer a particular favour on me by letting me know if you feel disposed to treat with Lady Clarke for the musical farce on which she is now occupied; and also to mention what are the usual terms given for such productions. I have made it a point with her that you shall have the *refusal of her first attempt* for the London stage. I am fully aware she could not fall into better hands.

“ I am, dear sir, very truly yours, &c.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sydney Morgan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned centrally below the text of the letter.

“ Sir Charles desires his best respects.”

The following correspondence is laconic, and to the purpose, on both sides—the first letter addressed to Braham :—

“ MY DEAR SIR,—Will you have the goodness to state explicitly, whether you conceive yourself engaged at Drury Lane Theatre for the ensuing season, as it becomes absolutely necessary for my arrangements, that I should have your decision upon the point within twenty-four hours? and in the event of my not being favoured with your communication upon the subject within the time I have stated, I shall conclude that you decline the terms I have offered.

“ R. W. ELLISTON.

“ T. R. D. L., July 22nd, 1824.”

REPLY.

“ 69, Baker Street, July 24, 1824.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—Your note of the 22nd I have only received *this* day; and as you limit the receiving my answer to *twenty-four hours*, I presume you have taken your measures accordingly. I am, my dear sir, yours most truly,

“ JOHN BRAHAM.”

In the spring of 1824, Mr. Brockenden, the artist, who had recently returned from the continent, brought with him a copy of Weber's opera of “ Der Freischutz,” which, with his usual liberality, he proffered to his friend, the Drury Lane manager. The musical score was immediately placed in the hands of the director of the establishment, when,

after some deliberation, the piece was declared *unfit for the stage*, and totally abandoned. Arnold having procured a copy of the same, produced it at his theatre on 22nd July, which he designated in his bills "an eccentric vehicle for music and scenic effect." "Der Freischutz" succeeded greatly, and made that season the most profitable he ever had. The opera was acted forty-three nights. Covent Garden brought it forward at the commencement of the the following season with good results, and it was there repeated fifty nights. It was left, however, to Drury Lane to justify the full claims of this celebrated opera.

When "Der Freischutz" was originally produced by Arnold, Mr. Bennett sustained the part of *Caspar*, but being unable to sing the music incidental to the character was sung by Mr. Phillips, who was at that time a member of the chorus. This imperfect arrangement was also adopted at Covent Garden Theatre, the part of *Caspar* being played by the same Mr. Bennett. To any one who may have witnessed the opera, as subsequently represented at Drury Lane Theatre, the above substitution must appear highly detrimental to stage illusion ; and such, indeed, was the case.

Ellistou, though late in the field, was determined to be the greatest, and produced this opera with its entire music, as arranged and composed by Weber himself. Horn was the *Caspar*, the best that has ever

attempted the part ; T. Cooke quitted his seat in the orchestra to play *Adolph*, which exactly suited his powers ; and Mr. Mountain was engaged to lead the band. The piece was very well performed ; the voices of all the singers harmonized, and the music was nearly perfect. One great feature in this opera was O. Smith's *Zamiel*, which he dressed with striking effect ; the almost imperceptible movement by which he covered his victim, and the manner in which he disappeared, greatly added to the illusion of the scene ; but the incantation scene far exceeded anything that had been witnessed on the stage. The gradual increase of terrific objects in various directions, and the horrific abruption, in which two gigantic figures (admirably conceived by Stanfield) rose to the whole height of the stage, formed a phantasma never surpassed in the history of dramatic mechanism.

CHAPTER XIII.

The "Glass Blowers"—Kean after the Trial—His reappearance—Great excitement—A poetical Philippic—Mr. Douglas Kinnaird—Kean again—Vagaries at Brixton—Antique Roisterers—A scene at Bow Street—An author in trouble—Master Balfe—Early anecdotes of Harley—Country actors—Ralph Wewitzer—Some account of him—A night at Peake's—Oratorios—John Ashley—Princess of Cumberland—Singular statement and misfortunes—King's Bench prison—Death of the princess—The Young Roscius—Statement of his extraordinary receipts.

NOVELTY ever found considerable favour with Elliston in his scheme of management ; but eccentricity was absolutely germane to his being ; and if a suggestion had only been made, which was without precedent, for him it was enough, and the question of merit became a minor consideration.

For the pantomime of this season, "the Great Lessee" had engaged a troop of glass-blowers, who were to pass, in procession, over the stage, in some particular scene, as they have been witnessed a thousand times in the streets of London. What effect this was to produce, beyond the mere transporting a dull and dreary party of clubbists from its accustomed ground, no one could imagine, un-

less indeed the failure of the enterprise, which was obvious enough to every one.

The glass-blowers, with their lenses, chandelier drops, salt-cellars, spun feathers, salad-bowls, glass eyes, inkstands, and (what was indeed a fresh phenomenon to the Drury manager) empty wine-decanter, made their transit from O. P. to P. S., on the first and only night of that year's harlequinade; after which, like meteors, they were seen no more.

This vitreous enterprise, in fact, was smashed. Elliston now dismissed his prismatic friends; but they, insisting on their engagement—namely, for the whole run of the pantomime, refused to take their discharge. A considerable altercation now ensued between the parties, the glassmen blowing "like furnace," threatened immediate destruction to the manager's chandeliers; but recollecting, that "they who live in glass-houses should not throw stones," removed their complaint to the sitting magistrate at Bow Street.

The van-guard blower, who carried a glass-spun barrister's wig on a pole, was selected to open the case, which he did with considerable ability; the gentleman who poised the salt-cellars followed on the same side, and a case, which we might fairly call "*splendidior vitro*," was made out against the abating manager. Elliston, as usual, relied upon his speech, but, though not of the glass party, he was as easily seen through; for the worthy magis-

trate, considering his defence altogether in the light of an evasion, gave judgment against him. The affair was, however, compromised, and the glassmen, true to the motto, "frangas non flectes," retired peacefully to their own homes.

But the horizon of Elliston was becoming hourly more gloomy. Disaster alone was the fortune of the Olympic Theatre. Tenant after tenant failed ; no money reached the thirsty exchequer of the still buoyant comedian ; and before February, it became necessary for Elliston to sell his copyhold property at Vauxhall, producing a ground-rent of 60*l.* per annum, and also sundry leasehold houses in that neighbourhood, on an unexpired term of sixty-three years, at this time advantageously let.

On the 24th of January, Kean was announced for the part of "*Richard III.*" at Drury Lane ; three days previous to which Sir Richard Birnie came to the theatre, by the directions of Mr. Secretary Peel, and represented to Elliston the ill-judgment and indelicacy of the dramatic measures, as Kean's trial in the Court of King's Bench (Cox *versus* Kean) was scarcely a week old.

Elliston deemed it prudent to take the hint, and immediately started off for Croydon, where Kean was sojourning, for the purpose of discussing the matter with him. The manager was told the tragedian was in bed, but would see him. Elliston

then proceeded up stairs, and opening the door of a sleeping-room, discovered Kean, sitting up in bed with a cigar in his mouth, and a glass of brandy and water on his knees. At the further end of the apartment stood a "broom-girl," in picturesque attire, who had just concluded one of her characteristic melodies, accompanied by an itinerant tumbler, who was in the act of vaulting over the chairs and tables for the tragedian's amusement.

Elliston we believe might have been startled—as to blushing, we apprehend those days had long passed away—and, entering at once on his purpose, proposed some brief postponement of the tragedy; but Kean would listen to no suggestion of the kind—he declared himself ready for war, and on the 24th would meet his enemies on that ground, which, by the assent of all England, was his own. "In the meantime," added he, "observe how quietly I am living here."

At about four o'clock, on the day in question, Kean arrived at the theatre, where a dinner had been prepared according to his directions, for himself and two friends; but an intemperate indulgence on the previous night, rendered him unfit to preside at his entertainment, so that his two friends sat down without him. As the hour of seven approached, immense crowds were collected about the doors of the theatre. Many, of the lowest rabble,

who had no means—whatever might have been their desire—of getting into the house ; but they hoped, at least, to hear something ; and in the failure of any disturbance within, appeared not at all disinclined to try the experiment without.

Prepared for war, as he had expressed it, (“ for a man can die much better with brandy”) Kean presented himself to his “ enemies,” when indeed he might have exclaimed—

“ I understand a fury in your words,
But not the words ;”

for a shout, intermingled with innumerable indistinct epithets of reproach, now broke over him, which, to do justice to his valour, he sustained with a firmness worthy the cause of action. No cast of character had won him half the clamour of this cast in damages ; and when, in the language of *Glo'ster*, he came to the words—

“ Now do I fear I've done some strange offence,
That looks disgraceful in the city's eye,”

the tumult might verily have “ torn the cave where echo lies,” for it was beyond description. After this manner the play proceeded and terminated. Kean occasionally made a faint attempt to address the audience, and though he appeared to give signification of the injustice of not being listened to, yet no offender ever rejoiced more in his escape

than he, in these tokens of refusal. The night's receipt, in precise figures, was a remarkable sum—viz., 666*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.*

The following lines, entitled “An Address to be spoken by Mr. Elliston on the occasion of Mr. Kean's re-appearance at Drury Lane Theatre,” are taken from the “News of Literature and Fashion.” They are certainly the dictation of an avenging spirit; and mercy, we are bound to confess, does not here season justice :—

“ In Charles's days (so * Scarlett told the court)
To plant with horns an alderman, was sport;
And now we see his courtiers' cast off airs,
As erst their worn-out clothes, bedeck our players.

“ I shall not here disturb a trifling song,
To ask if Charles's beaux were right or wrong;
But turn attentive o'er the witty page,
That tells too true the scandal of that age;
And you'll not find it blotted by a name
Of one, who first beguiled a civic dame,
And then, for filthy pelf, exposed her shame.†

“ No, Scarlett, no; the men were bad I own—
Their manners loose, and profligate their tone;
But they were GENTLEMEN! the heart and head
Might be to morals and religion dead;
But still the honour of their rank and race
Kept them from grovelling taint of actions base,

* See Scarlett's speech.

† It was not Edmund Kean, but Robert Albion Cox who exposed the civic dame.—*Editor of “Literature of Fashion.”*

And left to shabbier rakes the fame to win
By joining inborn meanness to the sin.

“ Your client, bred to tumble for his meat—
To act the monkey in plebeian street—
To twist like serpents round the painted pole—
To grin in barns, as harlequin or droll,
He—I'd have laid my fortune on the chance,
That he'd have done just what I here advance ;
Taught us how differ'd gentlemen in heart
From those whom we have hired to act the part.

“ Poor Cox ! his praise, when praise from him was pay—
Was Kean's—a novice, struggling on his way ;
His open purse upon his friend was poured ;
Open his heart, as open was his board.
' Purse, table, praise,' quoth Kean, ' then on my life,
So much he *gives* me—I shall *take* his wife.'
He took her—well, no doubt, the jade was naught—
Who feared not crime so much as being caught.
For years and years the intercourse went on,
Till Cox's fortune all to wreck had gone ;
While loss and ruin o'er his house impend,
He finds his wife a wanton to his friend.
Stung to the soul, he quits his faithless mate,
And leaves the heartless frail one to her fate ;
Reft of her home—destruction in her view,
She looks to Kean—and Kean deserts her too !

“ What's the defence ? Why, nothing, but that she,
Whom first he taught the road to infamy,
She, whom his fatal guile and glozing tongue,
Had from his *friend's* confiding bosom wrung,
Had since improved *his* lesson, and had now
Her virtue lost, cast shame from off her brow.

“ Go, libertine ! if e'er you dare to meet
The crowd wide gaping in Old Drury's seat ;
Of deep *Othello*, we shall learn to trace
The blackness in your heart—not in your face—

Of *Richard*, his deformity to find
Not in the mimic back—but real mind—
Of *Shylock*, not the feeling of the Jew,
But his mean soul, in all its dusky hue.
Perhaps *Iago* may thy nature fit;
But then *he* was a warrior and a wit.
No, no; go act your old buffoon'ry o'er,
And play the serpent and the ape once more."

Kean not having completed his engagement with Elliston, at the period of Easter, owing to the interruption which his trial had occasioned, returned some few weeks afterwards to Drury Lane for that purpose, proposing four extra nights in addition. This proposition was accepted. At Easter, however, he had addressed the audience, on leaving them, and, in a speech of considerable length, warmly eulogized his manager, designating him by the title of "father, brother, and friend."

Kean played his extra nights, but so unproductive was the experiment, that Elliston was unable, at its close, to make good his undertaking to the actor. Within a week of this event, Kean arrested his "father, brother, and friend," for the sum due to him.

Mr. Douglas Kinnaird thus addresses Elliston, on the subject of the late engagement:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am sure you will give me credit but for one motive in writing to you. As you have done me the honour to consult me once

or twice lately about the most advisable course to be pursued in regard to Mr. Kean, I am emboldened to take the liberty of offering you my opinion, that Mr. Kean is lost if you again permit him to be thrust upon the stage, and to make absurd and senseless speeches. I entreated Mr. Calcraft, last night, to urge upon you that, if Mr. Kean answered the partial and unmeaning call for him, he should only announce the play, and disappear. It is sending him forth to fight a shadow. He has no opponent. There is no accuser—no specific charge ; but there is an irresponsible persecutor—viz. *a portion* of the press. He must retire, or bear it like a man—patience, and he will beat it. The public would consider him, if silent, a victim. But he must not make speeches. What he said last night was much more objectionable than what he uttered the second night, which was bad enough.

“ My opinion is, that by his speeches he has lost the battle ; and he should retire till the new play comes out. Yours, very truly,

“ DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

“ Pall Mall East, Thursday, February 1st, 1825.”

“ To R. W. Elliston, Esq.”

After playing *Richard III.*, on a certain night, in the course of the above re-engagement, Kean took the sudden determination of walking to Croydon—an experimental project, as he said, to recover

what he had lost by the exhaustion of acting ; on the principle, no doubt, of a counter-irritation in inflammatory cases.

After having walked some miles, he stopped at a roadside public-house, near Brixton, where, meeting with a party of drovers and wagoners, he and his companion became presently two amongst them. " Dog's nose" and " Early purl" had been in circulation ; for it was about one o'clock in the morning ; and a dispute having arisen between one of the drovers and a gentleman, who, by the ribbon he wore across his breast, was a rat-catcher, respecting the sale and delivery of a pair of lace boots, our itinerant tragedian took part in the controversy.

To Kean's great mortification, matters appeared to promise an amicable termination, when the tragedian, abruptly starting up, and thrusting the drover's nose with a blow into his mug, declared if no one else were inclined for a fight, he himself would not be disappointed. The pint mug hint, however, was quite sufficient ; for the drover, smarting under the pain of the sudden collision of the pewter, with the cartilage of his face, sprang from the cask of herrings, on which he was sitting, and leaving the rat-catcher to bag the boots, with one blow brought poor Kean to the ground. Vainly did our tragedian's companion interfere, for Kean himself declared for fair play. Fight he would, but he speedily got the worst of it in this second essay—the drover

was an overmatch for the little hero of Drury, and within three minutes Kean got as thorough a thrashing as he had ever received.

The result was, he did not proceed to Croydon at all ; but at noon the next day, was discovered fast asleep in his dressing-room at the theatre, literally one mass of mud.

Tarleton, of much earlier days, had a very similar taste ; who, with Scoggen, Skelton, and Master George Peel, delighted in disturbing our sober forefathers. These boon companions would get royally drunk with lords and loose citizens, under the same vintner's sign, in the reign of good Queen Bess : Killigrews, Rochesters, and Ogles, of a hundred years before.

Of the eccentric Mrs. Charke (daughter of Colley Cibber) we have elsewhere spoken. She was a match for the best at fencing, was a good shot, and would ride a race with the most knowing jockey in the country. She was a fiddler, an actress, a shopkeeper, a sausage-seller, a *valet-de-chambre*, an alehouse-keeper, and mistress of a puppet-show.

In March, the following singular scene took place in the public office, Bow-street :—

A gentleman, under great excitement, styling himself a dramatic author, applied to the magistrate for protection against the managerial resentment

of Mr. Elliston ! The applicant in this case was a small delicately-made gentleman, of pensive aspect, with a slender circlet of *moustachery* entirely surrounding the portal to his interior ; and his *tout ensemble* gave melancholy proof that he had taken more of Fortune's buffets than her rewards. He had some difficulty in making his way to the table through the crowd of more robust applicants ; and when he had accomplished this, he addressed the magistrate in these words :—

“ My name, sir, is Webb ; I am a surgeon, and author of a ‘ Manual of Medicine,’ which has been presented to his Majesty. But that is nothing to the purpose, for my present business has reference only to Mr. Elliston. You may probably recollect, sir, that, at the time of Thurtell's horrible affair, the science of phrenology made much noise in the world. In consequence of what was then said of that science, I wrote a farce, which I called ‘ The Phrenologist,’ and I presented it to Mr. Elliston for his approval. It is not for me, sir, to say anything of the merits of that farce, but, after repeated applications to him on the subject, it was restored to me at the door of his dwelling-house by a servant girl, who added to the mortification by returning it with a sneering giggle ; which Mr. Elliston may perhaps call civility, for he is extremely unlike other men, as your worship is, no doubt, very well aware.”

The magistrate (Mr. Halls) observed, that these were matters with which he had nothing to do ; and requested Mr. Webb to state at once what was his object in applying to him.

Mr. Webb then went on to declare, that a letter, signed X.Y.Z, having appeared in a morning paper, commenting on Mr. Kean, he (Mr. Webb) had replied to that letter in his own name ; in which reply he introduced Mr. Elliston's conduct touching the farce of " The Phrenologist," and in consequence he had received what he considered a very threatening note from Mr. Elliston. " And here it is, sir," he continued—" sent *open* by the post—agreeably to Mr. Elliston's delicate mode of doing things." He then handed the note to his worship, and added, " I conceive, sir, it contains a threat of personal violence ; and as I have written some works against the cant and hypocrisy of the age—and particularly of Parliament, which works may probably be prosecuted ; I am anxious to go into court with clean hands, by showing publicly before you that I am a man of peaceable character seeking for protection.

" Really, sir," said the magistrate, when he had read the note, " I do not see that he threatens you with managerial ire ; which may be a very dreadful thing for aught I know, but I should rather think it would be as harmless as theatrical thunder. At all

events the threat is only conditional ; for he says there, ‘ If you interfere with my concerns, I shall inflict such portion of my resentment upon you, as, upon further inquiry, your conduct may appear to merit.’ You have only, therefore, to attend to the ‘ if,’ to be perfectly safe, I should think : and, at the worst, as I said before, you have nothing to fear but a little theatrical thunder—unless, indeed, he were to commit——”

“ Whatever it might be, I would crop his ears,” said Mr. Webb, and stalked out of the office.

Charles Horn had introduced, this season, to Drury Lane, a youth of considerable musical abilities, particularly as a violin player—a wild, ungovernable lad, but a special favourite with all his acquaintance. Within a very few years, he became one of our most successful and accomplished composers, and whose vocal attainments have justly gained for him the highest place in public favour. This youth is the present Mr. Balfe—we cannot forbear inserting one of his juvenile applications to the theatre :—

“ Monday.

“ Master Balfe requests it as a favour that Mr. *Elliston* will send him his discharge to-night as he does not intend to *enter the theatre again*. If Mr. *Elliston* wishes to know the reason, it is because

Master Balfe will not play until his week's salary is paid; if Mr. Elliston will send him his discharge, in writing, Master Balfe will thank him; and, if not, Master Balfe, being under age, begs leave to let Mr. Elliston know he will not, until forced, go into the Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

“R. W. Elliston, Esq., or Mr. Winston.”

Harley, the agreeable Harley, now took his benefit; and the numerous friends who were assembled on this occasion, testified the respect the public are ever willing to display, where private worth is united with professional merits.

When Harley, in 1805, first resolved to tempt his fortune on the stage, he addressed a letter to Wroughton, who was then the acting-manager of Drury Lane, which was immediately answered, and an appointment made to meet him on the stage. Harley now fancied he was engaged, and made up his mind to figure on the Drury Lane boards as the principal tragic hero. True to his appointment, he commenced with one of *Glenalvon's* soliloquies—“So Lady Randolph shuns me”—which did not appear to make any great impression on the manager. Harley was not only at that time very thin in person, but also in voice.

“Now,” said Wroughton, “for your comedy!” and he gave him a bit of *Jeremy Diddler*, which he had played a few nights before at a private

theatre in Berwick Street. This appeared to please the manager; he gave several raps on the stage with his stick in token of approbation, and Harley concluded that his fortune was made; and growing bold upon the encouragement, said—"Sir, I can sing a little;" but was stopped by—"Enough." Wroughton questioned him very closely as to his prospects in life, and if he had his friends' consent. Harley laid open his history, told him he was intended for the law, but that "He would be an actor." Wroughton advised him to stick to the law, and by all means to give up so precarious a profession as that of an actor; "but, if you are determined, I'll write a letter to my friend Dowton." He wrote accordingly, saying there was an oddity about young Harley, and thought he might be made something of. Dowton recommended him to his manager at Rochester, *Bony Long*, a great character, who had five fingers and a thumb on each hand. Bony said he could not engage an untried actor; "But," said he, "Jerrold has a company at Cranbrook—he wants an actor of your description; and I will recommend you." Jerrold replied, "I can give you fifteen shillings a week, if you have a tolerable wardrobe, and a benefit on the York plan, sharing after *five* pounds. (Five pounds would have been a crowded house.) I shall expect you, next Tuesday, to open in *Alonso*, in 'Pizarro.' " Harley jumped at the offer—but in fact

appeared in *Sir Charles Cropland*; the farce was the "Citizen"—*Quilldrive*, by Mr. Jones; which Jerrold requested Harley to play; "for, between you and me," said he, "our company is rather thin, and there is no such person as 'Mr. Jones:;' the part is only four or five lines; but I will give a point that will get you great applause, and make your benefit." There had been a great deal of rain at Cranbrook, and the place nearly deluged; the water was carried off by very small apertures, called there *gully-holes*. Harley was remarkably thin; Jerrold's joke was—"I am so thin that I fear, if the rain continues, I shall disappear through some of the *gully-holes*." This wonderful point succeeded as to applause, but not to the amount of a benefit.

So few were the numbers in the company, that in the "Honey Moon" Harley played *Jaques*, *Lampedo*, and *Lopez*, which he contrived to accomplish by the assistance of several wigs and cloaks. In "John Bull" he played *Dan*, *John Burr*, and *Sir Francis Rochdale*; another actor, *Peregrine* and *Tom Shuffleton*; and Mrs. Jerrold played *Mrs. Brulgruddery* and *Frank Rochdale*, representing the latter in a pair of very loose nankeen trowsers and a very tight short jacket, and which constituted, in fact, the chief humour of the evening. The whole company consisted of four white males, three females, and a negro.

Early in January, poor Wewitzer the last metropolitan contemporary, we believe, of Garrick, expired suddenly, being found dead in his bed, at his lodgings in Wild-passage, Drury Lane. He had entered his seventy-seventh year. The Theatrical Fund directed their undertaker to provide the funeral. The coffin was duly supplied, and the body therein inclosed, when the landlord of the deceased, to whom the latter had been indebted 14*l.*, seized both the corpse and coffin, which he detained to satisfy the amount. Intelligence of this fact being conveyed to a niece of the departed comedian, who resided near Finsbury Square, she immediately satisfied the debt in question, and the remains of poor Ralph Wewitzer were committed peaceably to the earth, in the burying-ground at Bunhill Fields.

Wewitzer had the character of a wit ; and the term "Wewitzer's last" almost passed into a proverb. He was the author of a farce called the "Rake's Progress." Sheridan had so good an opinion of the piece, that he purchased it for 60*l.* and the money was actually paid. Wewitzer also produced a successful pantomime at the Haymarket. He dabbled a little in poetry ; published a jest-book, and a dramatic chronology, and had it in contemplation (being an excellent French scholar) to benefit the world by a work on the idiom of that language.

As an actor, Wewitzer's merits were limited, but in the parts of *Jews* and *foreigners*, he pre-eminently excelled. His *Canton* and *Moses* were of the very first order of dramatic art.

Wewitzer, in the early part of his life, entered on many speculations, but was never successful in any. One summer he opened the *Royalty Theatre*, and lost considerably, or, more correctly speaking, his creditors; for a few months after, he took the benefit of the act. One of his schemes was to supply fish at a more reasonable rate; and he entered into partnership for that purpose; but his indolence suited not that business. One morning, when called up to attend Billingsgate at a very early hour, which it was his duty to do, three times a week, he said, "*Sortez d'ici*—I am the dormant partner."

Though in the receipt of 80*l.* a-year, for the last five years of his life, he was always poor, and for ever borrowing trifling sums, generally half-a-crown. He usually favoured his friend with a very small note — "Please lend me half-a-crown." Wewitzer never forfeited his word, for the conclusion of his notes generally ran, "but I shall never pay you."

Two of his sisters were on the stage; one became Lady Trelawny—for many years she lived in Ireland, and was residing there at the time of her brother's death, then upwards of seventy years of age. The other sister married a Mr. Lane, and

lived in retirement. Wewitzer, for many years, had no intercourse with either of these sisters.

In social intercourse he was instructive and entertaining; he abounded in anecdote, and, in conversation, his sallies of wit, as they were void of offence, caused his company to be much courted.

The presence of Wewitzer was necessary on a certain occasion, at the house of Mr. Peake, where Sheridan had appointed to meet John Kemble, at eight o'clock in the evening, to transact some Drury business. Kemble was pretty punctual to his time. To occupy the interim, however, between this and the arrival of Sheridan, Peake produced his best Cognac, hot water, and double-refined sugar. The assembled party sat down, and each began to mix for himself.

Conversation, of course, ensued; Peake and Wewitzer listened to the distinguished guest with the liveliest interest and satisfaction. The conversation was animated and the topics various—the brandy was of the finest flavour, and met equal justice with the objects of attention. After *some time* Kemble, with remarkable quietude of manner, demanded what was the hour. “Half-past four,” responded Peake, with similar composure; on which Kemble, rising quietly from his chair, walked towards the window, and, deliberately unfastening the shutters, let in the warm

saffron rays of morning, and, gazing into the street with quiet unconcern, exclaimed, "Well, Mr. Peake, I don't think Mr. Sheridan will be here to-night."

Of Wewitzer, Anthony Pasquin has the following :—

"Like a racer, light mounted, he oft wins the plate,
But is distanced with ease, if you add to his weight;
Yet his *Caius* and *clowns* we may see and admire,
And his *Bellaire*, like glass, is engender'd by fire;
His *Frenchmen* are free from offensive grimace,
And his *Jews* you would swear circumcised in Duke's Place."

We submit a short correspondence, between the manager of Drury Lane and Braham, on the question of an oratorio engagement. Our readers may, perhaps, feel some interest in knowing the terms at which leading vocalists account their services :—

"Southampton, Feb. 26th., 1825.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I think thirty guineas per night a very moderate remuneration for your humble servant, which would amount to 360 for the oratorio season. Especially as you have the theatre, band, &c., on your own terms, and which lessens your risk considerably. However, as I wish really to be of service to you, I will say 300 guineas certain, and shall expect the additional sixty according to circumstances. I leave this place for Portsmouth, and if (as the vulgar say) you wish to do

the thing genteelly, I shall be favoured with your answer according to my proposition of 360 guineas for the twelve oratorios. Ashley paid me five hundred pounds. I remain, dear Elliston,

“ Yours, truly,

John Braham

“ When does the oratorio take place ? ”

“ T. R. D. L., February 9th, 1825.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—I am glad that we are to meet again, and your 300 guineas in cash, most duly paid, shall be given to you ; as for profits, the expenditure will be so great, there is but little hope ; however, if it come, it will be welcome.

“ Let me see you as soon as you arrive, and I will endeavour to make an arrangement by which you may return to your favourite theatre the next season. Remember me respectfully to Mrs. Braham, and believe me, my dear Braham,

“ Yours most truly,

“ R. W. ELLISTON.

“ John Braham, Esq.”

John Ashley, who conducted the oratorios at Covent Garden theatre, in earlier days, was a

laborious and persevering man, and so careful of his gains, that he not only secured his gold under double lock and key, but kept the very hiding-place itself a secret from every member of his family. He would shift his hoards from place to place as frequently as Oliver Cromwell changed his sleeping apartment, so that, about every third night, his bags and boxes were treated with a fresh lodging. “ ‘Fast bind fast find,’ a proverb never stale to thrifty mind.”

The keys of his money-chest had more harmony for him than the keys of the harpsichord, and these he never permitted out of his sight, or, at least, his feeling, for he constantly carried them in his clenched hand, or, if in his pocket, still within the grasp of his fingers.

It was during the performance of one of these oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre, that John Ashley was suddenly seized by a fit of epilepsy, and fell, as though stricken with death, in the Green-room of the theatre. Medical aid was speedily produced, and, for a considerable time, it was doubtful whether or not the attack was fatal. The patient, however, was so far restored, as to regain consciousness of things around him, when, earnestly clasping the hand of his friend, who bent over him, he exclaimed, “In the name of Heaven, tell me what sort of house it is.”

In March, 1825, Elliston received a letter, bearing the royal arms, from a lady who had rendered herself conspicuous for several preceding years :—

“ The Princess of Cumberland presents her compliments to Mr. Elliston, and informs him that she has received her opera of ‘ Human Nature,’ but that the one of ‘ Half an Hour Too Late’ is not returned, &c., and her highness is informed that it has been used; both operas were delivered to Mr. Elliston in one envelope. The Princess Olive requests the favour of an explanation, &c.

“ Rules of the King’s Bench, April 7th, 1825.

In December, 1809, Olivia Wilmot Serres advertised, from No. 12, Cleveland Row, St. James’s, the publication of her miscellaneous works at one guinea; six years afterwards a letter appeared in the *Champion*, signed *Olivia Wilmot Serres*, 8, Queen Square, in which she stated, and gave very plausible reasons and corroborating circumstances that her uncle, *Dr. Wilmot*, was the author of “ Junius;” and a few months afterwards, numerous documents appeared in the public papers, proving that she was the legitimate child of the Duke of Cumberland, who married privately Miss Olive Wilmot. These documents were signed by George III., and witnessed by Lord Chatham, Lord Warwick, and others; and the Duke of Kent, when she grew up,

appointed her (his *cousin*) to have the care of his daughter ; all parties were bound to secrecy during the life of George III., the Duke having married another lady two years after, and therefore was guilty of bigamy. George III., by will, left Olive 15,000*l*. She published these documents under the expectation of obtaining the money from government.

Shortly after the death of the king, all the documents were again brought forward, but no notice was taken of her claim ; she then lived in Alfred Place, to which abode she sent for Mr. Birnie, the magistrate of Bow Street, in consequence of a pistol having been discharged at her on the previous night while undressing, the ball passing through the glass and very near to her. She was constantly before the public in some way or the other ; at last, she got in debt, was arrested, and taken to a sponging-house. A day or two after, the town was placarded by large bills, of which the following is a copy :—

“ A few months before (July), Scarlett moved the Court of King’s Bench that the *Princess of Cumberland*, (who had been arrested in a civil action,) to have all the proceedings stayed, on the ground of privilege. The rule was refused, the privilege having been waved by putting in bail.”

On the 27th of October, 1821, the princess was removed from the sponging-house to the Fleet in her carriage, the servants wearing the royal livery.

The rules being prepared, she went into lodgings at a hosier's shop, the corner of Fleet Market and Ludgate Hill. From the one pair of stairs window she frequently addressed the crowds which assembled to gaze on a princess, and it was with some trouble the landlord got rid of the nuisance.

In 1823, her case was brought before the House of Commons. Mr. Peel treated the matter with ridicule, and proved, as he said, that the whole of the documents were forgeries.

Not a week passed without some paragraph appearing relative to the lady, who still persisted in calling herself "*Olive*," and "her Royal Highness the Princess of Cumberland."

From her letter to Elliston, it will be seen that in April, 1825, she was in the rules of the King's Bench ; from which place she issued the following advertisement :—

" HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS OF CUMBERLAND AND DUCHESS OF LANCASTER.

" Advertisement to the English Nation.

" Her Highness Princess Olive of Cumberland and Duchess of Lancaster experiencing serious difficulties in the rules of the King's Bench, from large sums being not yet paid, which are due to her from the estate of the late Duke of Kent and Earl of Warwick ; with deference and respect acquaints

the English nation that she is anxious to raise a loan of 2000*l.* from 200 persons, each subscribing 10*l.* for the purposes of present pressing exigences, to proceed in recovering the several large sums due to her ; and to obtain the blessing of *personal liberty* (having been from 1821 until this period in captivity). With the highest sense of gratitude, the Princess Olive will receive whatever sums are subscribed for her benefit to this loan, and will honourably repay the same out of the first proceeds of the sums owing to her herein specified.

“ OLIVE, &c. &c. &c.

“ August 13th, 1825,

“ 34, Belvedere Place (Rules of King's Bench).”

In 1828, she was within the walls of the King's Bench, as will appear from her advertisement :—

“ PRINCESS OLIVE.—To Gentlemen of the Profession of the Law.—The Princess Olive has been nine months a prisoner in the interior of the King's Bench prison, and although illegally detained there, having no funds to enable her to redress her injuries, she has been compelled to submit to so distressing a captivity, after being seven years detained for a few debts in the rules of the Fleet and King's Bench. With much difficulty the princess has settled the judgment debts against her (here), and will feel grateful for respectable

professional advice, to enable her to immediately effect her liberation from her illegal captivity, &c.

“ OLIVE CUMBERLAND.

“ 17 in 10, King’s Bench Prison, April 16.”

In April, 1830, the whole of the documents were again laid before the public. If she were an impostor, she certainly was the most daring one that ever fabricated a tale, or forged a document. She appealed to living witnesses ;—were they all inventions? One of her stories, whether true or false, might have been ascertained, his lordship being then alive, and never contradicting it.

“ Before I knew my royal birth, a circumstance introduced me to the knowledge of his late Majesty, in 1804. As I was, early one morning, making a drawing of the castle at Windsor, the King asked me, among other questions, my maiden name, which I informed his Majesty was *Olive Wilmot*. He appeared to be greatly agitated. A few days afterwards, the Earl of Harcourt paid me a visit, and presented me with 1000*l.* from the King, saying, I was to have further sums by applying to himself, &c. &c. This 1000*l.* was in hundred pound notes, and Lord Harcourt took them out of a remarkable snuff-box, which his lordship told me was a great curiosity, being one of the smallest oil paintings that Morland, the celebrated artist, had ever executed ; the subject was a Yorkshire land-

scape and figures. By his late Majesty's conscientious and gracious donation, it is evident, that when he learnt my name, he knew me to be his injured niece."

While in the King's Bench this lady addressed the editor of the *Morning Herald*: "I have the certificate of my royal parent's marriage, and my baptism as the daughter of Henry Frederick Guelph, Duke of Cumberland, and Olive, his wife, bearing the signature of a virtuous clergyman of the church of England; a certificate afterwards corroborated by Lords Chatham, Ashburton, and Warwick; and I was fully christened in 1821, at St. Mary's, Islington, according to the rank of my royal parents; and I declare, that if libellous attacks appear in public prints against me, I shall resort to the laws of these realms for redress.

" OLIVE."

For two or three years very little was heard of this lady. On the 26th of November, 1834, an advertisement appeared in the *Morning Herald*: "Should Lavinia Stell be living, daughter of the *Princess Olive, of Cumberland*, who departed this life, on Friday, the 21st instant, it is hoped this will meet her eye, as she may yet be in time to see the LAST REMAINS, by applying at 48, Trinity Square, Borough."

Elliston had now sundry interviews with Mr.

Betty, the celebrated English "Roscius," with the view of an engagement being entered into for the services of that gentleman for a few nights, at Drury Lane Theatre. These meetings, avowedly on points of business, so frequently—indeed, so invariably—terminating in the good fellowship of a supper and the flowing bowl, nothing was ever settled on the theatrical measure; the parties usually separating on fixing some future day for business, which day terminated after the same manner as all preceding. "We've done nothing to night," said the manager, "but, on Thursday next, we will finally settle." Chedron's Hotel was generally the spot of the "belle alliance"—suppers were more discussed than plays, and far more bottles opened than theatrical engagements; in fact, the original object was ultimately completely lost sight of by both parties, till they separated for the last time, on better terms of cordiality, perhaps, than might have been the result of any professional connexion.

Mr. Betty was born in the parish of St. Chad's, Shrewsbury, on the 13th of September, 1791. He was in his 13th year when he first appeared at Covent Garden Theatre. Some account of the extraordinary success of this gentleman may not be unacceptable to our readers.

The engagement of Master Betty, the "young Roscius," occasioned a great schism between the

Drury Lane and Covent Garden proprietors—each had their agents, who followed him to various places where he was acting. A very voluminous correspondence took place between principals and agents, and, at last, the arbitrament was left to the Rev. Bate Dudley, whose decision was, *that they each had an equal claim*; the “Roscius” was therefore to play six nights at each theatre, alternately, at fifty guineas a night; a clear benefit at each theatre, at the end of every six nights—his first six nights at Covent Garden. He appeared in *Achmet*, in *Barbarossa*.

1804. MASTER BETTY.

1.	Dec. 1.	Covent Garden	<i>Achmet</i>	-	-	£638	18	6
2.	„ 3.	ditto	<i>Ditto</i>	-	-	493	13	6
3.	„ 4.	ditto	<i>Young Norval</i>	-	-	578	0	0
4.	„ 5.	ditto	<i>Frederick, (Lovers' Vows.)</i>	-	-	591	14	6
5.	„ 6.	ditto	<i>Ditto</i>	-	-	528	17	0
6.	„ 8.	ditto	<i>Young Norval</i>	-	-	579	11	6

THE YOUNG ROSCIUS.

7.	Dec. 10.	Drury Lane	<i>Young Norval</i>	-	-	706	8	0
8.	„ 13.	ditto	<i>Ditto</i>	-	-	751	9	6
9.	„ 15.	ditto	<i>Achmet</i>	-	-	618	16	6

He was advertised for the 18th, but did not act,
from illness, until the 28th of January.

1805. MASTER BETTY.

10.	Jan. 28.	Covent Garden	<i>Young Norval</i>	-	-	571	13	6
11.	„ 31.	ditto	<i>Frederick</i>	-	-	563	3	6
12.	Feb. 2.	ditto	<i>Octavian</i>	-	-	616	15	0
13.	„ 5.	ditto	<i>Ditto</i>	-	-	520	14	0
14.	„ 7.	ditto	<i>Romeo</i>	-	-	644	13	6
15.	„ 9.	ditto	<i>Ditto</i>	-	-	589	9	6

Carried forward £8993 18 0

THE YOUNG ROSCIUS.

			Brought forward	£8993	18	0
16.	Feb. 13.	Drury Lane	<i>Young Norval</i>	-	719	18 0
17.	„ 15.	ditto	<i>Achmet</i>	-	604	14 6
18.	„ 19.	ditto	<i>Frederick</i>	-	616	1 6
19.	„ 21.	ditto	<i>Young Norval</i>	-	688	17 0
20.	„ 23.	ditto	<i>Tancred</i>	-	606	2 0
21.	„ 26.	ditto	<i>Ditto</i>	-	618	12 6
22.	„ 28.	ditto	<i>Frederick</i>	-	612	4 6
23.	Mar. 2.	ditto	<i>Young Norval</i>	-	647	1 0
24.	„ 4.	ditto	<i>Romeo</i>	-	521	19 0
				£14,629 8 0		

The average of the first twenty-four performances was 609*l.* per night. After completing his engagements of twelve nights at each theatre, a fresh one was made in the Drury Lane proprietary, at *one hundred guineas a night*. He played during the season, at both theatres, fifty-seven nights; the whole receipt amounted to 32,416*l.*, and the average of the whole was 586*l.* per night.

Master Betty received for 57 nights' acting	-	£4725
Also four free benefits, each exceeding 500 <i>l.</i>		2000
		£6725

Kean played 68 nights during his first season,		
the receipt was	- - - -	£32,902
Master Betty acted 57 nights	ditto „	32,416

Kean's average nightly receipt was 484*l.*—Betty's 586*l.*

Mr. Betty is still living, respected by the friends of his youth, and greatly esteemed by all who may since have known him in his days of retirement. The recent successful appearance of his son at Covent Garden Theatre cannot fail to be a circumstance of interest to those who recollect the brief brilliant career of the "Young Roscius."

CHAPTER XIV.

George IV. at Drury Lane Theatre—Lord William Lennox and Elliston—A midnight visitor at the Horse-Guards—Hostile preparations—A drive home—Letter from Lord Graham—“William Tell”—Letter from Macready—Rehearsal of the new play—Terry and Yates at the Adelphi—Scene on the Hastings Road—Outside passengers—Adventures of a coat—A country actor—John Sobieski—A perplexed author—Elliston’s illness—Extraordinary proposition—A theatrical “D’Eon”—Meditated American trip—“Invisibline”—Letter from Talma to Elliston—Another attack of illness—Medical certificate—Elliston’s reverses—A prisoner—Mr. George Robins’ letter—Account of Drury Lane Beef-steak Club.

THE 2nd of May was fixed for the royal visit to the theatre, and the monarch of Drury Lane was prepared to give a fraternal welcome to George the Fourth, “and so forth,” as he was wont to be saluted by Hook’s ally, “The very Reverend the Dean of Patcham.”* The king had held a drawing-room at Buckingham Palace, on the morning of this day, and a few untoward events, added to the fatigue consequent on the ceremony, found his Majesty not in the most serene temper of mind on his return to Carlton House.

* The Rev. E. Cannon.

But “ the best bred gentleman in the land ” was not likely to betray any unseemly feelings of this description to those around him, and the coarse behaviour of the London mob, which had followed the royal cortège from the Palace to Pall Mall a few hours before, seemed now altogether to have passed from the memory of our gracious Sovereign. By the King’s desire, however, the captain of the escort, Lord William Lennox, rode immediately abreast the window of the royal carriage, an arrangement wisely preconcerted ; for, on the morning, as the august party were passing the entrance to the stable-yard, a missile was projected at the King’s person, which struck the captain of the escort a pretty palpable hit. The gallant captain, however, shook his plumes, and all was well again.

The doors of the theatre had been beset from an early hour in the afternoon, for the king’s visit on this occasion appeared to excite more than an ordinary sensation. The rush into the theatre was tremendous. Considerable uproar, from various parts of the house, ensued, on disputed seats and packed benches, which, just as the King entered his box, being at spring-tide, his Majesty felt impressed was chiefly directed towards his own person. The Lord Chamberlain at once perceived the King’s feeling, and instantly requested his vice-official, Lord Graham, to descend, and at once see the manager, that the uproar might be appeased by explanation. Lord Graham now hastened to the stage, where,

meeting Elliston in full costume, and totally forgetting he was accosting a crowned head, exclaimed—

“ Mr. Elliston, this is disgraceful ! Why is the theatre so inconsiderately over-crowded ? You should have prevented this excess, sir. The King is vexed, and will never again come to Drury Lane.”

This speech, addressed as it was with considerable acrimony to Elliston, surrounded by many distinguished strangers and followers of the court, besides troops of his own subjects, very sensibly nettled him. He replied with equal warmth, but ten times greater dignity ; when, at that moment, espying Lord William Lennox, he added—

“ Now, my Lord Graham, I have a friend ; my wounded honour I shall place in the hands of Lord William ;” which having said, he sweepingly led the way across the stage into his own private room, the captain of the guard following.

This private room, the temple of “ Mars, Bacchus, Apollo,” and the Cytherean queen, exhibited, at this moment, striking symbols of the various deities, which rendered the apartment a complete pantheon. Lord William, *en cuirass* ; Elliston “ with his sword by his side ;” full bottles and empty bottles—the long-necked champagne and the rush-covered curaçoa—plays, poetry, and the “ London Gazette”—fans, tippets, and handkerchiefs “ of the smallest spiders’ web,” formed

such a dulcet confusion of effects, tending far more, at this moment, to "puzzle the will," than to offer a calm occasion for the consideration of a most pregnant question.

Elliston now entered grandiloquently into the nature of his grievance; but his friend soon perceiving that, though the vice-chamberlain might have wounded the dignity of the manager, Moet had clearly disordered his wits, gave him certain advice, which produced the following reply:—

"You are right, my lord. The deputy has affronted me, and a deputy shall reply to it. My stage-manager shall take up the question in its present shape. I shall meet no one, but the Lord Chamberlain himself. My Lord, a glass of wine? Champagne or Madeira?"

"The latter, if you please."

Here Elliston rang the bell, and on an attendant entering, exclaimed, "Draw a bottle of Don Pedro's Madeira. We will drink, if you please, 'The British Army.'"

"By all means," replied Lord William; "and let us add, the fair owner of this little plaything," taking up carelessly a small ivory fan. On this piece of gallantry the conversation took a turn, so abrupt and so completely of a contrary nature to the great question at issue, that we should only interrupt our main narrative by repeating it. . . .

The curtain had fallen on the night's entertainment—the King had returned to Carlton House—

the escort to the Horse Guards ; and it being now one o'clock of the following morning, the captain had doffed his leathern pantaloons and huge jack-boots, preparing himself for repose, when a sharp knock was heard at his chamber door.

“ Who's there ? ” interrogated the Captain, not a little disinclined to intrusion at such an hour.

“ The corporal of the guard,” was the reply.

This was, of course, enough—his Lordship was decently equipped within a few minutes, waiting further intelligence.

“ One of his Majesty's secretaries of state, my lord, on urgent business.”

“ What can it mean ? ” murmured the Life Guardsman.

“ I know not, my lord, but he said it was on business—‘ vital ’ I think was the word. The gentleman has been to-day at court, and is now in the sitting-room.”

To the sitting-room Lord William immediately proceeded, when he beheld, seated in an arm-chair, no less a personage than the monarchy of Drury Lane—King William Elliston, in the same court gear, in which he had a few hours before attended the monarchy of Great Britain ; but, a little damaged.

“ I have taken the liberty,” observed Elliston, in a manner even more impressive than his usual delivery, “ during your lordship's delay, of ordering a weak glass of brandy and water from the Canteen.”

Here the manager paused to sip his mixture—"My lord, we must go out this very morning—I am steady to my purpose," added he, reeling actually in his chair.

Lord William now perceived that a confused recollection of Lord Graham's affront, with a total forgetfulness of the advice he had promised to obey, had brought Elliston, drunk as—a lord, from the theatre to the Horse Guards, there to renew the story, and pass the remainder of a quiet evening. The only question with the Captain was, in what manner to get rid of his guest.

Lord William now pursued the same policy he had taken in the manager's room—namely, representing that it was utterly impossible the monarch of Drury Lane could go out with any deputy whatever; and that, if he did, so far from his honour being vindicated, it would be more deeply involved.

To this Elliston listened as to a perfectly new proposition, and fixing his eyes steadily on Lord William, during a very lengthened pause—at last said—

"But, my lord—there is one question yet—"

"Name it, by all means."

"Might I suggest one more tumbler of brandy and water?"

Lord William now began to take up a policy for himself; and considering, that under the influence of this "one more tumbler," his guest might be less able to offer opposition to his "order of removal," he gave assent for a replenish of the glass,

which the Canteen man, having an eye to business, presently supplied.

Elliston having liberally tasted of this "refresher," committed himself to the confidence of another pause, after which he said—

"My lord, I have had the pleasure of waiting on you this night, to beg your lordship's acceptance of a private box at Drury Lane Theatre, for the new opera, on Monday night."

"Oh! by all means," replied Lord William, laughing; "and thank you."

Here Elliston drained his tumbler, and rising, not without considerable difficulty, paced the apartment after the manner of one trying thin ice. He now opened the door, looking into the passage with evident anxiety.

"Can I assist you, Elliston?" asked Lord William, offering him his cocked hat, and disentangling his sword from his silken legs.

"By no means," replied Elliston; "but your man is a long time about this tumbler of brandy and water."

"Nay, nay," cried Lord William, again laughing, and willing that, as his guest had got as far as the door, he should still improve his retreat—"nay, nay—you forget—you have already despatched it; and really, as it is very late—"

"True, true!" interrupted Elliston, drawing out his watch, and looking at the reverse side of it; "we must be going—Lord Graham will be punctual

—hair triggers, my lord—and my hand is steady as iron. Where 's Winston?"

"Hush! Do you know what day this is?—Sunday morning."

"Then," said Elliston, after a long owl-like pause, "we must have had a pretty long discussion; and, let me add, your man is a tedious while mixing this brandy and water."

"He is the slowest fellow in the Canteen; we'll go and look after him," saying which, Lord William took Elliston by the arm, first placing the cocked hat upon his head, and led him through the passages into the street, where the hackney-coach was still in waiting.

Lord William clung to his friend like ivy about an old wall, and fairly kept him from falling. Their tottering progress was, of course, noticed by sundry stragglers, and amongst them the Canteen man, whom Elliston eyed with such a humorous look of reproach, that the man absolutely burst into a fit of laughter.

"'You are merry, Pierre?'" said Elliston, interrogatively.

"Pardon, sir," replied the sutler; "but I have reason."

"Then, sir, 'tis the only evidence you have ever given, in your days, of such a blessing."

Elliston now, after some further difficulty, was placed in the hackney-coach. "You'll follow, my lord?" said he, in a confidential whisper.

“ Certainly.”

“ Then, I am content. To Shooter’s Hill !” exclaimed the manager to the driver. “ Where’s Winston ?”

Lord William was now about giving the coachman particular instructions respecting the safe conveyance of his friend to Stratford Place, when the man, with a gesticulation which Munden might have envied, said, “ I’m his honour’s own body-coachman—have driven his honour for these seven year—all right.”

Lord William being now satisfied, the monarch of Drury was in the hands of a trusty minister, withdrew once more to his own apartment; he soon fell asleep, but his friend the manager was still at his side, the events of the day being minutely reflected in the mirror of his dream.

The next morning, or rather that very morning, by ten o’clock, Robert William Elliston, in full possession of his energies, and far more alive to business than many about him, was at his writing-table in his private room, that temple of the muses, or, more correctly, *amusettes*, in which, ten hours before, he had toasted the fair owner of the ivory fan.

In the course of the morning the following letter reached him :—

“ SIR,—I regret to have heard that you felt hurt at some expression I used towards you, the other evening. As this was far from my intention, my

only object being to induce you to take some means which would remedy the disorder in the pit, and the unpleasant situation in which persons were in that part of the Theatre; as well as the annoyance which it was to his Majesty, and the rest of the audience. I feel sorry that you should have misconceived me so as to suppose I would intentionally have said anything disagreeable to you.

“ I remain, sir, your obedient,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Graham', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

“ Wednesday, Grosvenor Square.”

ELLISTON'S REPLY.

“ MY LORD,—I am perfectly satisfied you expressed yourself unguardedly ; but it has been observed by one of our best writers that, “ an affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation,” and I assure you that I fully concur with the spirit of that sentiment ; allow me to add, my lord, that, from my earliest years, I have been bred with the most ardent feelings of respect and duty to my King, and that I have been favoured with so many marks of royal patronage that I should be greatly disturbed could I for an instant neglect the remotest point of attention, under any command with which his Majesty might be pleased to honour

me. Permit me then to flatter myself with the hope, that you may see, in my future endeavours, some cause that may justify the very kind manner in which, my lord, you have so amply healed my wounded feelings. I beg leave to subscribe myself

“ Your lordship’s most obedient servant,

“ R. W. ELLISTON.

“ The Most Noble the Marquis of Graham,
&c., &c., &c.”

On the 11th of May, Sheridan Knowles’s drama, “ William Tell,” was acted at Drury Lane Theatre, for the first time. Its success was unqualified, and Macready’s impersonation of the hero, a most effective and masterly piece of dramatic art. The history, however, of this play, immediately preceding the night in question, is rather curious. The fifth act was in rehearsal, on the morning of the 10th, when Macready abruptly quitted the theatre, declaring the play was not in a state for representation on the following night, and that he consequently should not then act the part. The consternation of the manager may be imagined. A messenger, with a letter from Elliston, was despatched to Macready, at his residence, Hampstead Heath, but he returned with the forbidding reply, that Mr. Macready positively refused to play on the next ensuing evening.

On the following morning, Elliston received the

annexed letter, which, in justice to Macready's friendliness and liberality, we beg to insert :—

“ Hampstead Heath.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—Your note was delivered to me in bed, last night, and I was obliged, in consequence, to return a verbal answer. I can only repeat my deep regret, that you should be inconvenienced ;—to relieve you in two foregoing predicaments exactly similar—‘ The Winter's Tale’ and ‘ Gracchus’—on great persuasion, I went before the audience imperfect in those characters ; and were I now in health and strength, I know I should long since have been induced to yield to your necessities.

“ I certainly said, more than once, that you might almost rest secure of me for Wednesday, 11th ; but since then, the question of the play's performance was, for three or four days, mooted by Mr. Knowles himself, which interfered with my study, and, at the time I said so, he had engaged to stay in town and assist me, which he has not done, but left me entirely to my own resources. As to neglecting rehearsals, I cannot really divine to what you refer, unless to my quitting the stage yesterday, when you asked a gentleman there to arrange the last scene of the play. I received from Mr. Dunn, and now again I read from yourself, that you do not wish me to play the part at all, if not to-night. If you will give me back my strength and health, I will do it. I am truly, truly sorry that I cannot ; and since my engagement

must be of little or no value to you without a novelty, I do not desire to take your money, or occupy your nights, unless I fully answer your demands on my exertions.

Unprepared and imperfect as we are I am OBLIGED to say, I cannot (although I would if I could) play it to-night. In declaring this, to show you that I wish only justice, I also state that I will, without a murmur, abandon my engagement, and even my benefit night, the only *chance* I look to for meeting the expenses of my coming and staying here, rather than that you should be able, for one moment, to impute to me selfish or sinister motives.

“ I am, with every good wish, my dear sir,

“ Yours very truly,

William Charles Macready

“ May 11th.

“ P.S. I mentioned this yesterday before the advertisement could go. Again and again, I am very sorry.”

But the production of the play for the 11th was still a vital question with the lessee ; one effort more was resolved on, and Elliston, now accompanied by the author's father, proceeded for that purpose to Hampstead. On their way thither they met Macready, on his road to town, when the whole party directed their steps to Drury Lane—Macready here

still refused to comply. George Robins was eloquent, and backed his hopes by a bet, that Macready would yet assent. Calcraft, on the other hand, was buried in despair. Efforts were yet stirring until five o'clock ; but in vain. At length, however, Calcraft, in most impressive language, begged the trial of the play, as a personal favour, pleading the serious exigences of the establishment. Macready yielded—the play was acted—and no drama had ever been more triumphant, or more perfect on a first representation.

Terry, in July, purchased, in conjunction with Yates, the Adelphi Theatre, and withdrew himself, consequently, from Drury Lane Theatre. He showed Elliston a letter, which he had received from Sir Walter Scott, enclosing 500*l.*, an intended legacy to his godson, Walter Scott Terry, which he now advanced to the father to assist him in his new purchase—alas, poor Watty was never benefitted by a single penny—the whole being swallowed up in Terry's failure.

Elliston was not always sole champion in the joust, whatever it might be, of fun or frolic—sometimes the “ sold ” as well as the “ seller ”—a magnet, to all intents and purposes, and, like it, possessing the essential poles, of propelling and receiving.

On a certain occasion, at the close of this season,

he and Beazley met, as fellow-travellers, on the outside of the Hastings coach; there was also a third person, a steady-looking stranger, who sat by them. After travelling several stages together, in the merriest humour imaginable (that is, Elliston and his companion) the coach arrived at Riverhead, the place of Beazley's destination. Here he alighted, and, noticing the atmosphere to give pretty positive indications of a storm, observed to Elliston, in the most confidential terms, as he was descending, that in the event of rough weather, he was at liberty to use his great coat, which lay on the roof of the coach, on condition he would bring it safely to London at a stated time. The offer was extremely opportune, and so accepted. The friends shook hands; Beazley struck off into a new direction, and the coach proceeded towards Tunbridge.

Within ten minutes, surely enough, the windows of the heavens were opened, and a pitiless rain came down. Elliston, of course, seized the coat, and had already thrust his right arm into it, when the prim stranger started up, and, with a most grotesque look of dismay, exclaimed, "Hollo, sir!—that's my coat?"

"Your coat, sir?" responded Elliston, forcing the other arm with greater resolution into its appropriate sleeve—"your coat, sir? I hold this property under an assignment of my friend, who has just quitted us."

"Your friend, sir? I know nothing of your

friend, and as little of you. I only know that's my coat, and I must have it." Here the rain poured down still more furiously ; and in vain the disseised claimant protected himself, by buttoning up the scanty black coat which he already had on, and covering his kersey pantaloons with a shattered cotton handkerchief, figured by the signs of the Zodiac, of which *Aquarius* was uppermost—" Sir, I'm wet through already, and must have it—must—must—I tell you."

" My friend—if you take this coat, I shall be wet through also ;" emphatically observed Elliston, " and there is no occasion for both of us to suffer by one shower of rain."

The fact is, by this time, Elliston had clearly perceived he had been made a subject of Beazley's wicked imagination, but the stranger a far greater victim ; and as our hero felt there was really some logic in the words he had just used, he turned deliberately away from his neighbour, and hugged himself still closer under the folds of his most ample wrapper.

" D—n it, sir," cried the traveller, " I'm a quiet man ; but this is enough to make a Quaker strangle his grandmother. Sir, I must have my coat—my coat, sir."

The rain still appeared to increase, and the manager still closer hugged himself.

" D—n it, sir, but you shall hear of this !"—

roared the stranger, who perhaps had never been in so thorough a passion before in his whole life—
“ whoever you are, sir. Here, coachman—stop ! stop, I say ! I’ll go before a justice——”

“ Stop, just in the middle of the town, sir, in ten minutes,” said the driver, without turning his head.

These ten minutes were employed by the actors outside the stage in about the same manner as many previous ; excepting, that in the same ratio as the rain fell, so mounted the choler of Elliston’s poor dripping companion.

The coach no sooner stopped than down sprang the stranger in the kerseys, which positively clove to his bones tighter than his own skin, and, in a fury not to be described, commenced a headlong appeal to the coachman. The driver, who was himself a bit of a wag, soon discovered, by our hero’s style of justification, that some waggish game had been at work, and was about advising a division of the property between the two claimants, by tearing the surtout into two equal parts, when Elliston magnanimously said—

“ No ; this quiet gentleman and myself have both set up a claim to the garment in question, and the worthy judge, like another Solomon, would recommend a severance of the limbs. To that I am not the consenting party. Listen then,” continued he, unbuttoning the coat, and deliberately

preparing to put it off, as the rain had by this time considerably abated. "Listen! I have enjoyed possession for seven miles, and will make a new assignment of an uninterrupted tenure to my friend for the remainder of the journey."

"But I am going no further!" screamed the appellant.

"Nor I neither," replied Elliston, who now descended and walked into the inn-yard to order a chaise for a cross-road, which led to the place of his destination, namely, the Wells.

It was at the request of the committee of Drury Lane that Elliston had set off for the purpose of seeing a certain actor, who was then engaged at the Wells Theatre. Some reports favourable to his pretensions had reached the ears of that august tribunal, and the manager forthwith departed on his expedition.

The play was "Richard III.," the actor in question sustaining the principal character. That it was a wild-goose chase may be readily believed, for disapprobation was soon manifested in very palpable hisses, and by the end of the third act, the endemic pervaded the whole audience. The acting certainly was bad, but the ill-nature of the audience a far greater scandal of the two. Suddenly the poor persecuted player, dropping his character, advanced to the front of the stage, and thus addressed his judges:—

“ Ladies and Gentlemen—Mr. Kean is playing this part in London at a salary of 30*l.* per night : I receive but 15*s.* a week ; and if it is ’nt good enough for the money, may the Lord above give you a better humanity.”

This well-timed reproof, delivered with much point and feeling, won instantly all hearts to his favour. It is unnecessary, however, to state, the charm did not extend to the manager of Drury Lane.

The “ iron tongue of midnight ” had tolled twelve as Elliston was stepping into his carriage from the stage-door of Drury Lane Theatre, when a stranger suddenly sprang forward from an obscure corner of the hall, and, presenting his card, demanded an instant audience from the fleeting manager.

“ I am, Mr. Elliston,” said the stranger, “ the author of a tragedy, enclosed many months ago to this theatre, by the title, ‘ John Sobieski.’ I have called, sir, fourteen times at this door, and——”

“ Is it in a blue cover ? ” demanded Elliston, with much vivacity.

“ The very same.”

“ Then just step into my carriage, and we will talk the matter over.”

The author having obeyed, Elliston followed, and with great deliberation threw himself back on his seat, and the vehicle moved on. The imprisoned author naturally looked to this opportunity for talk-

ing the matter over, but, to his great mortification, the manager uttered not a word. Within twenty minutes the carriage drew up in Hadlow Street, Burton Crescent, at the residence of James Wallack, when Elliston, with that solemnity of manner, so essentially his own, begged to be excused for a short time, as he had some important business to transact with his friend at the house in question. The dramatist, though a little astonished, had no choice but consent, and out stepped the manager, leaving *John Sobieski* tenant of the vehicle. The fact was, Elliston had engaged to sup with Wallack, and had arrived, true to his appointment, for that agreeable purpose. Not a syllable now passed between the two friends respecting *John Sobieski* in the coach, and, in the course of ten minutes, Elliston had altogether forgotten he had ever heard of such a being.

Wallack's supper, as may be well believed, was liberal enough, and liberally partaken by his liege lord, the manager; and, at about three o'clock in the morning, Elliston, having dipped into more tumblers of brandy and water than plays, was about taking his departure, after the best manner he was able. Appearing now to recall some little recollection of *John Sobieski*, who still remained in the carriage, Elliston desired his coachman to descend, and making him take an inside seat *vis-a-vis* to the patient Pole, he mounted the box, and gathering up the reins, drove off.

What passed during their sinuous course between "John" the coachman, and "John" the Pole, has never been ascertained, but in due time the party reached Elliston's stables, when the galliard manager descending, with the same air of gravity with which he had mounted, deliberately walked to his own home, leaving his man and the author to settle between them all that remained to be said on "John Sobieski" in the blue cover.

Before noon, however, of that very day, Elliston inclosed the missing tragedy, with a very penitent letter, and a free-admission to Drury Lane for the season, to the enraged dramatist.

"Authors spring up like mushrooms," observed Mr. Calcraft, on hearing Elliston had refused this play.

"They do," replied the great lessee; "but if they were only half as good, I should like them better."

Elliston now again gave some indications of mental wandering, which, though not so alarming as on the former occasion, to which we have elsewhere alluded, were yet distressing to his immediate friends. Most unfortunately for him, particularly at this period of his life, he was favouring the friendship (if so it might be termed) of that dissolute "city acquaintance," of whom we have before had occasion to speak, and who subsequently hurried him into excesses, to which he

was habitually but too inclined. Winston, who was, beyond all doubt, one of the sincerest friends the manager ever had, made vain attempts, from time to time, to break asunder the pernicious intimacy. But infatuation never yet has been overcome by reasoning; and although there were moments when Elliston appeared even to despise himself for that moral cowardice, which had ever been his besetting sin, yet he soon relapsed into his first error, unmindful that every fresh indiscretion multiplies the rate of penalty.

Booth, it is said, in the latter part of his life, fell into fits of aberration, in a great measure, brought on by an overweening notion of his greatness in his profession. The last part he acted was *Julio*, in the "Double Falsehood;" the malady so greatly increased, that he died soon afterwards.

Elliston receives the following strange announcement from a "stricken" youth, dated from Devonport:—

"SIR,—I have at length summoned fortitude, and address you. My resolution is to tempt my stars on the stage; this, many have hazarded before me, some with success, others with failure. My experiment, therefore, is no new story. The course, Mr. Elliston, was your own. Good fortune has attended you; in some respects (pardon me) more than you deserve. But to my point. I shall make

my attempt on the stage, under a feigned name ; but this, sir, will not be my only concealment !

" My age is not quite eighteen years. I am slightly built, and not fully developed ; but my style of acting is the bold—the impressive—the stately—and the grand. In one word, the disguise I hint at will be my sex : I am a fair youth, and desire to try the part of *Meg Merrilies*. Should I succeed, I would then proceed to *Elvira* and *Lady Macbeth*. History shall record me the 'D'Eon' of the stage. When of age, I shall come into possession of considerable property ; I then quit the stage, and bid you farewell. My trustees and yourself shall be alone possessed of the secret. Should you entertain my proposal, on which many minor points still remain for discussion, direct a letter, "C. M.," to be left at No. 9, a stationer's, Newington Butts, nearly opposite the church."

It is needless to say, the "*Chevalier*" had no response from the manager. Within a week from the date of the above, Elliston received a brief note from the impatient "false one," censuring his neglect, and demanding an immediate answer. The answer, however, not forthcoming, nothing further was heard of the *Chevalier*. The above was supposed to be an "ebat" of Theodore Hook.

The failure of a drama which had been produced at Drury Lane, under the title "Five Minutes too

Late," and brought out with very considerable expense, was a serious blow to the subject of these Memoirs. The piece was produced with the view of giving a representation of the coronation of the King of France; written by George Colman. Although aided by the masterly productions of Stanfield, who actually went to Rheims to make his necessary sketches, and many incidental exertions, involving an extensive outlay, the result of "Five Minutes too Late" was a melancholy event to the struggling manager.

The prosperity of Elliston was gone; his resources fast failing, and his health materially invaded; but he was still not without hope; and there were moments (alas! nocturnal) when, under the influence of his old treacherous friend, the distiller, he yet resolved "with a light heart to begin the world anew."

Certain it is, a very novel determination occupied him for several weeks, and this was a trip to America, whereby he calculated on reaping considerable profit, and by his absence silencing, in a great measure, popular abuse, which, at this period of his history, was heaped unsparingly upon him.

He now sent for his eldest son, William, whom he had recently placed at the university, to take the management of the theatre, and, on the 19th, Mr. Calcraft attended a meeting of the committee, to make arrangements for Elliston's departure. For

some unexplained cause, the Atlantic project was finally abandoned.

Three years had nearly passed away, and Elliston had heard nothing of "Invisiblina," when a letter reached him, dated the 20th, from his mysterious monitress :—

"I ne'er shall stay my prose or lay—
My caution ne'er shall end,
Until I hear you're fairly clear,
Of your base *city friend*.
While both you quaff—he has the laugh—
You pocket all the care,
The *silversmith* is Falsehood's myth,
And plated as his ware.

"You nightly meet—you pay the treat—
But that is not the worst,
He gains his end upon his friend,
A usurer accurst.
For "silver stand," your note of hand
You give, as ready quit—
While he has due your I. O. U.,
And serves you with a writ.*

Elliston having presented to Talma, in the summer, a very beautiful Roman stage sword, which had been especially manufactured, received the following handsome acknowledgment from the French tragedian :—

* These frequent hints of "Invisiblina," apply to a disreputable silversmith with whom Elliston had become, unfortunately, familiar.

“ Paris, September the 1st.”

“ MY DEAR MR. ELLISTON,—I am informed by the newspapers that you were not in a very good state of health. I am very anxious to know if there is any truth in that report ; however, I keenly wish that this letter may find you in better spirits. Mr. Hunter, whom you charged with the sword and your letter, was to take my answer ; but I missed him, and found him gone. Not having seen him since, I have determined to write you by the post ; so I beg you will excuse me for the delay. I return you my most hearty thanks for the valuable token of your friendship and testimony of your kind remembrance. How do you go on with your theatrical affairs ? Has your “ French Coronation ” filled up your cash-box ? I hope, for the good I wish you, that the English copy has attracted a greater afflux of gazers than the French original. We have been accustomed to so many extraordinary things in France, that we take very little notice of those kind of shows ; but if we, like you, are not permitted to expose to public gaiety, upon our theatres, mock-priests and all the ecclesiastical hierarchy, we have, in reward, the immense advantage to possess them in reality, and all the congregation of the Jesuits over the bargain.

The newspapers tell us that Macready and Kean have left you to hunt after fortune in America—is not it a great loss for you ? I see that you have been much perplexed by the

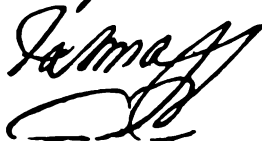
amorous adventure of the latter. The public were, indeed, very unjust towards him ; for, on the stage, he was but the representative of *Richard* or of *Hamlet*. They had nothing to do with Mr. Kean, the private gentleman, seducer or seduced. They had a right to judge of his capacities on the stage, and not of his wrong doing in the chamber. His life in the vulgar world had no relation with his life in the poetical world. The stage and a court of justice are quite distinct things ; but, my dear sir, in England, as in France, the Public, by a secret impulse of envy, delight often in putting down the idol they have once erected ; they are like those capricious savages who flog their gods when they imagine they have some cause of complaint against them. As, with regard to Miss Foote, it seems that public opinion has taken another course ; but it is not surprising ; opinion upon the actions of those who lead a public life often forms itself at random ; it is a kind of lottery—hazard makes the losers and the gainers—however, it seems that our old French gallantry has passed over to England, and mastered even your stern judges ; they have sided with the fair sex and taken the part of beauty. So much to their credit !

God bless you, my dear Elliston, and let me tell you, like the doctor in our Molière, *Salus, honor, et argentum atque bonum appetitum !*

your most well-wisher & friend

" Rue de la Tour des Dames."

G G



The physical state of Elliston was of that quality, that the labour and anxiety of half a century might still have found him active and unshaken; but a havoc had been made, by habitual dissipation and excesses, which, down to this time, although causing no very visible indications in his external, had totally rooted up the strong foundations of his constitution. In apparent health, he had attended the general meeting of Drury Lane proprietors, on the 23rd of July; his energies were at their accustomed pitch, and his mind displayed that usual quick perception and ability to business, for which, from a youth, he had been remarkable.

On the 5th of August, not quite a fortnight from the above meeting, only then in his fifty-first year, Elliston had become, as though by the retributive visitation of the slighted deity, Prudence, a helpless, decrepit, tottering old man. Awful, as remarkable, was this sudden change. From his erect position he had sunk, like the yielding foundations of a stately pile—the proportions of the fabric were lost, and he seemed yet to survive only at the will of chance. But Dr. Pearson had had much experience in his patient. He persisted that Elliston would yet live, and rally; for it was now confidently reported his dissolution was at hand.

Within a few days, Elliston was so far recovered from this extraordinary attack, rather of general defection than any substantive disease, that he was able to take a short drive in his carriage; and, on

the 14th of the same month, while returning from one of these brief excursions, he was arrested by a Jew, residing in Hemming's Row, for 50*l.*—a sum which had remained still unpaid, of an enormous amount, which the manager had inconsiderately given for a few suits of clothes, which had been used in the unfortunate "Five Minutes too Late." Had the poor invalid been only journeying as many minutes earlier, he might, for a time, have escaped this pitiless salutation.

On the following week, he was at liberty to be removed, on board a steamer, for the purpose of going to Ramsgate—a place recommended to him by his physician ; and a power of attorney was in consequence executed, empowering his eldest son, William Gore Elliston, to act for him in the affairs of the theatre. The language of the medical certificate, under which the power was granted, is rather curious :

" I do hereby certify that Robert William Elliston, Esq., is at this time labouring under inability in the use of his hands, so as to deprive him of the power of writing the letters of his own language, or of any other language ; but that he is in a perfectly sound state of mind, and, of course, competent to transact any business requiring the faculties of reason.

" GEORGE PEARSON, M.D., Physician.

" George Street, Hanover Square,
August 15th, 1825."

Kenny was now appointed young Elliston's adviser; and had the official been equal to his duty, the Elliston interest in Drury Lane Theatre might, for a time, have been kept together. Kenny received a salary of 7*l.* per week; he attended the theatre but rarely, and produced two unsuccessful pieces.

The committee constituted a management of seven, (a number calculated to provoke remark,) and, on the 24th of September, 1825, Drury Lane Theatre again opened, this being the sixth season of Elliston's term.

On the 24th of November Elliston returned from Ramsgate, considerably improved in health, but still unrestored to the use of his hands. He had the mortification of discovering his affairs, which had become "Fine by degrees, and beautifully less," in a still deeper state of embarrassment than when he quitted London. This the committee having foreseen, called together a meeting of their body, and the result of their deliberations compelled their lessee to retire within the sanctuary of the rules of the King's Bench Prison.

The expenses at this time at Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres greatly exceeded 200*l.* per night. In 1765, those of Drury Lane were less than 70*l.* The company consisted of about 160 performers. Garrick was at the head of the company, with a salary per night of 2*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.*; Yates

and his wife at 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* ; Palmer and his wife, 2*l.* ; King, 1*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* ; Parsons, the same ; Mrs. Cibber, 2*l.* 10*s.* ; Mrs. Pritchard, 2*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* ; Mrs. Clive, 1*l.* 15*s.* ; Miss Pope, 13*s.* 4*d.* ; Signor Guistinelli, (chief singer,) 1*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* ; Grimaldi and his wife, (chief dancers,) 1*l.*

To St. George's Fields, that territory of his early fame—the soil which he had actually rendered famous, the “Great Lessee” of Drury Lane now withdrew. But in his obscure spot, Temple Place, he was neither forgotten nor neglected by many friends his good fellowship had once acquired ; so that, like William Oldys, there was some danger of his becoming positively enamoured of his retreat. Nor were there wanting others, who, having still faith in the prosperity of his days to come, collected around him through more worldly considerations. Though still labouring under infirmity, yet his stout heart and natural temperament sustained him buoyant over his almost unfathomable perplexities, and enabled him to view, with an unruffled spirit, some scandalous attempts to blacken his reputation and irritate his creditors.

The “Times” newspaper, which had never spared his follies, visited his misfortunes with but little mercy ; and, in consequence of certain misstatements, Mr. Robins publishes the following letter in a contemporary journal :

“Covent Garden.

“SIR,—Having read in the *Times* journal of this day a statement, under the head of ‘Affairs of the late manager of Drury Lane Theatre,’ in which my name is introduced, you must allow me, in justice to myself, to Mr. Elliston, and to those creditors who attended the meeting in question, to assert that scarcely one syllable of that report is correct.

“It is stated, that Mr. Elliston proposed to mortgage the lease and wardrobes of the Olympic, Croydon, and Leamington Theatres, to his creditors. This is not the fact. Mr. Elliston’s sons have been some years lessees of his Leamington property, upon a fair and equitable rental; and as to the Drury Lane lease and wardrobe, so maliciously adverted to, I believe that every shareholder of the theatre has it in his power to contradict that part of the statement, inasmuch as their property, from the nature of the lease from the committee, can only be converted by Mr. Elliston to the use of stage representation at Drury Lane, as lessee of a ready-furnished theatre; therefore, it needs no conjuration to discover, that Mr. Elliston had it not in his power to make the lease and wardrobe over to his sons, for the purpose of cheating his creditors, as the informant of the *Times* would insinuate.

“The truth is, that since Mr. Elliston’s severe bodily affliction, his son has been delegated to manage his affairs, by power of attorney, in his

father's name ; but to state that Mr. Elliston has made over the property, of which the committee of proprietors are the sole guardians, only proves that there are people in the world so base as to deprive a man of the support of those friends which, in the hour of adversity, he stands so much in need of.

“ Mr. Elliston has expended upwards of 30,000*l.* in the improvement of the property of which he is the lessee, and to such a vast outlay, and his subsequent severe indisposition, are to be attributed his present difficulties.

“ It is not for me to give publicity to what may be Mr. Elliston's available property ; but I can boldly assert, without fear of contradiction, that one-fourth of the amount stated by the *Times*, and very considerably less than the sum expended on the improvement of the theatre, would clear Mr. Elliston from every pecuniary difficulty ; consequently, his debts have “ this extent—no more.”

“ To conclude : the statement, ‘ that a creditor present refused to sign the letter of licence, and added, that it was precipitate in me to propose it,’ is entirely without foundation.

“ There were assembled creditors to the amount of 12,000*l.* and upwards ; and I should do injustice to the kind feeling that actuated them all, were I to deny myself the gratification of stating that there was not a dissentient voice. I am, sir,

“ Your very humble servant,

“ G. H. ROBINS.”

Elliston, as we have observed, was not left to sour at "man's ingratitude" in St. George's Fields; and when visited here by "troops of friends," he would waggishly observe, "In the situation in which I now am, there are no followers allowed." His little tea-parties, notwithstanding, became positively a fashion, at least, a point of attraction; on which occasion, that gentle sex, as willing to participate adversity with those they regard, as worthy of sharing their prosperity, were by no means strangers. In fact, Elliston's tea-parties in St. George's Fields were as *spirituels* as Foote's in the Haymarket, and as many "good things" both said and acted. We doubt whether the tea-table of Garrick and Mrs. Woffington, with Dr. Johnson for their guest, could have been more sparkling. One lady presents him with a bouquet of her own culling, another with a woollen comforter of her own working, and a third some conserves of her own curing; and for conclusion,

"To make the worst, the monarch did no more
Than all the Ptolemys had done before."

In January, 1826, the Drury Lane Beef-steak Club was established. This, the youngest of many descendants of the first-born bearing this name, at whose christening Garrick himself stood sponsor, was by no means a sprig unworthy the family stock. The object of the Drury Club, of 1826, was to bring together, at the social board, artists connected with all departments of the drama, at stated periods;

where the flow of soul might be of the richest vintage, but the board itself moderate and limited. The dinner was literally beef-steak fare, and at half-past four o'clock punctually served up, so that the actors who might on the same evening be required on the stage, would have ample time and opportunity for partaking the good cheer, without interruption to their professional obligations.

One of the chief characteristics of this club was their place of meeting. This was in a small apartment expressly constructed within the large area of the painting-room, boxed in by thin partitions, painted and decorated by Marinari, emblazoned by appropriate symbols and illustrated by pointed sentences. The "*Leges Convivales*" were placed in a conspicuous part of the room. Here were no drones; the "*fruges consumere nati*" had here but little chance for admission, though, be it well advised, the beef-steaks themselves were excellent, and as thoroughly enjoyed. Discord and contention were perfectly unknown, unless indeed, that intellectual strife, in which the hits are sometimes hard, and the sense of them smarting; but, like those by Telephus, the inflicter himself administered a cure, in the perfect good humour by which he stanchd the wound. The steaks were dressed within sight and hearing of the seated guests, and the cook, in the true spirit of freemasonry, himself a member, was first-rate in his own department, and equally

jealous of his privilege. This "painted chamber," hallowed as that at Westminster, resounded again with the common congratulations of friends at half-past four, and re-echoed the alternate *bon-mots* as they fell, like hail-stones, from all points of the compass. Or rather, each member, like the princess in fairy land, opened not his mouth, but out dropped some flower of fancy, some spiritual exotic, by which the whole conservatory was fragrant. Here might Darwin have imagined a fresh "Botanic Garden," and conceived new fancies in luxurious rhyme. Here might Goldsmith have indulged in a new "Retaliation," and poured out his pleasant satire in characteristic touches. The "Great Lessee" was, of course, presiding genius.

Here also were commingled the wondrous sultanism of Elliston, the melody of Braham, the smart repartee of Cooke, the sprightliness of Wallack, the humour of Johnstone, the fun of Harley, the "franking" of Calcraft, the *bisticcio* of Beazley, the anecdote of Lamb, the versatility of Mathews, the sententiousness of Arnold, the *falsetto* of Kelly, the old school of Pope, the sly flings of Peake, the roar of Robins, the dry rubs of Dunn, and the amusing simplicity of Linley. Here the members sat, with their silver gridirons dangling from their buttons; not the only "orders," perhaps, then admitted into the theatre, whilst the company itself composed a "free list" far more choice and bene-

ficial than that which nightly crowded the narrow side entrance to the entertainments at Drury. The vocal course of the banquet was generally served with Kelly's "Woodpecker," Jack Johnstone's "First of August," and Billy Linley's "Woodman." Yet "all that's bright must fade," and the "Drury Lane Beef-steak Club," though in great vigour for the few years in which it flourished, at length dwindled to a shade, and lives now but only in tradition.*

* Of the original Beef-steak Club (to which we have elsewhere alluded), Mrs. Woffington was a member, and president, and the only woman admitted to the club. During its time, the Kit-Cat also flourished. This club took its name from Christopher Cat, who sold mutton pies, and it was held in Shire Lane, Fleet Street. About forty noblemen and gentlemen of the first rank, composed this celebrated fraternity. The verses for their toasting glasses were written by Garth, and the portraits of all its members painted by Kneller. Jacob Tonson was their "Billy Dunn" (secretary), and built a gallery at his house at Barn Elms, for the reception of the pictures, and where the club occasionally held its meetings.

CHAPTER XV.

“ Invisiblina”—A Scene in Oxford Street—An “ Eclaircissement”—Mr. Dunn’s Letter to Elliston—“ Rover” again—Rehearsal of Falstaff—Elliston acts Falstaff—His failure—Mr. Gordon—A scene “ behind the scenes”—An interview at Ibbotson’s hotel—Meeting of the Committee of Drury Lane Theatre—Copy of Resolutions—Elliston called in—Addresses the Committee of Drury Lane Theatre—Mr. Douglas Kinnaird in reply—The Theatre advertised for letting — A grotesque stranger — Elliston a bankrupt — The Chamber Street Theatre—Speculation given up—Elliston at Leamington—“ Ben Nazir”—Its representation at Drury Lane Theatre.

WE have, from time to time, found it necessary to turn our attention to the mysterious “ Invisiblina.” Her repeated letters, her undoubted regard to the interests and well-being of our hero, and her accurate information in respect of all his movements, as we have before explained, greatly disturbed him. This state of things still continued, and although years had passed away since the date of her first epistolary favour, yet an equal mystery still hung over the machinery by which she worked and the region of her habitation.

On a certain afternoon, Elliston, by some strange chance, being actually at home, a person rang at the street-door bell, and on a female servant ap-

pearing, placed a letter in her hands, addressed to her master, and immediately, at a brisk pace, made the best of his way into Oxford street. Elliston, at that moment was passing through his hall—he had caught a glimpse of the fleeting emissary, and having cast his eye on the superscription of the packet, at once perceived the nature of the correspondence.

Without waiting the delivery of his hat, he sprang into the street, and taking the direction of the letter-bearer in question, in two minutes had turned the corner of Stratford Place, into the stirring thoroughfare of Oxford Street. Here he paused for a moment, and again took to his heels, in the line of Cumberland gate. His pace and aspect, naturally enough, excited the stare and astonishment of the crowd; when at the corner of Duke Street, with an exclamation of triumph, he seized a person roughly by the arm, and in the half intelligible accents, which his breathless state permitted, cried:

“ Ay! now, now, I have you!—have you at last!—you shall evade me no longer—no longer!”

The man thus so unceremoniously handled and wildly accosted, turned with a look of dismay, for which a painter would have given the ransom of a king. The gazers thickened. “ Why—why—what’s this?” demanded the terrified *detenue*.

“ No—no, no longer!” repeated Elliston, ac-

quiring a little strength. "Where is she? what is she? Tell me! I must be satisfied."

The surrounding people, as little understanding the meaning of this address as the poor prisoner himself, were presently divided on two questions; one party looking on Elliston as a maniac, and another quite as satisfied the prisoner was a pick-pocket.

"Take him to the watch-house, sir," cried one. "I knows him; 't isn't the first time."

"Has the gentleman no attendant—no keeper?" questioned a second, who took up the other surmise in respect of Elliston's wits.

By this time the man who was still held by Elliston began to struggle violently for freedom, at which many voices shouted aloud, whilst the crowd still more and more thickened.

"Will you satisfy me on 'Invisibline?'" demanded Elliston, with the fury of *Octavian* himself.

"Release me, madman!" vociferated the other. The mob now shouted again.

At this period of our history the admirable street police were not in operation; but one or two more sensible persons than the mass of idlers around, suspecting some unhappy misunderstanding between the parties, now interfered, and by their dexterous management of the affair, Elliston and his *fast* friend were hurried within the doors of a neighbouring public-house; and the interfering strangers having followed, the crowd were suddenly

shut out, and left to "govern their roaring throats, and grumble" any affection of their senses they might please to indulge.

The scene being now shifted to the back parlour of the public-house, this eccentric drama proceeded. The passionate excitement of Elliston had a little abated, but the indignation of the unfortunate stranger, who had been so roughly handled, was considerably increased. Again he violently appealed, and angrily demanded the reason of this extraordinary usage, when Elliston, becoming somewhat intelligible, and the nature of the case being partly explained, it turned out (as the reader may guess) that the bewildered manager had laid his hands on the wrong person; the one present being a decent tradesman on his way home to his five o'clock tea and toast, and the real emissary of "Invisiblina," by this time, in receipt of his reward for his meritorious punctuality.

Elliston, who was never insensible to the demands of an apology, and who had the peculiar faculty of acquitting himself well under such circumstances, made a speech, which had presently the desired effect. An awkward and distressing misapprehension had taken place; and had not the worthy tradesman been the soberest man in the parish, in all probability a bowl of punch had been the concluding scene, in which one other person would have been amply satisfied, and he, the landlord of the house of entertainment.

Early in February, 1826, Elliston received the following communication from Mr. Dunn, secretary to the Drury Lane committee :—

“ T. R. D. Lane, 10th Feb., 1826.”

“ Sir,—I am directed by the sub-committee to offer their congratulations on the prospect of your arrangement with your creditors coming to a satisfactory conclusion ; and also on the success which has attended the theatre since the production of the pantomime, with their most earnest hope that, by judicious measures, the creditors may receive their full demands, and afford you the proud satisfaction of having accomplished so desirable an object.

“ The committee desire me to say, that they have come to the resolution of affording your trustees a temporary loan, for the purpose of concluding some arrangements necessary ; and they have directed me to acquaint you with the present state of your account with them as follows :—

106 nights' rent to 9th instant	-	-	£5300
Advanced by the committee	-	-	2950
			£8250
Paid on account of rent	-	£2000	
Ditto on account of loan	-	1300	
Deposit made in July	-	2000	
			5300
Balance	-	-	£2950

“ I am, sir, your very obedient servant,

“ W. DUNN.”

On the 25th of April, Elliston was so far recovered, that he once again made his obeisance before a crowded audience under the old roof, Drury Lane Theatre. *Rover* was again himself. He had wisely chosen this part for his reappearance, in which he had always given the most lively satisfaction, by a varied display of his rich comic powers ; and on this occasion, with the exception of a little rigidity of muscular action, he appeared to recuperate the very days in which his celebrity had been accomplished. The duration of Elliston's late confinement, under the double lock of law and physic, had not been unwisely employed. If we cannot, in sooth, repeat—

“ Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
Ease and alternate labour, useful life,
Progressive virtue and approving heaven,”—

we can, with confidence, declare that his time of estrangement, from the turmoil of Drury Lane Theatre, was occupied in a way creditable to his good resolutions, and with the view of accomplishing a great professional achievement. He had studied diligently in this interim the character of *Falstaff*; had read the best critiques on former actors in the part, and brought to his aid the most earnest application of his own natural perceptions.

On the 27th of February, the Olympic Theatre was brought to the hammer, when Mr. John Scott, proprietor of the Sans Pareil, and liquid blue maker, of the Strand, became the purchaser, at £5103.

His object was not merely to play the part of *Falstaff*; but he had the laudable ambition of "giving one laurel more" which should be worthy the memory of his early days, and become an epoch in the era of an honourable decline.

The 11th of May was the day advertised for his appearance in this character, in "The first part of Henry IV.," and, at the last rehearsal, on the boards of the theatre, a private party of friends was assembled to witness his reading of the several scenes.

Elliston, in tolerable health, was in the best possible cue on this special occasion. The interest he had taken in the part of *Falstaff*, appeared to increase as the night approached for his appearance, and his whole deportment gave out the fairest promise of such a triumph as might be worthy the time-honoured roll of Thespian record.

Not less encouraged by the friends around him, than animated by the project he had undertaken, Elliston went through the rehearsal of the part in a masterly and striking manner, delighting and astonishing all around him.

"What will he do at night?" was now the universal inquiry—which, while some asked themselves with sentiments of secure exultation, others repeated with most unwilling foreboding. A great house was expected, for Elliston and his friends were fully persuaded the eyes of Europe were fixed on the event of the 11th of May at Drury Lane. The re-

ceipts, however, did not amount to 180*l.* ; but the auditory was of a character, flattering to the comedian, being composed of the oldest play-goers and true lovers of the drama. Elliston played his part, and played it well. His rich, oily, vein of humour was copiously breathed in his delineation of the cozening knight, and his pointed delivery of his whimses, in soliloquy, rendered the performance, if not unequalled, yet assuredly striking. The truth must be told :—The keen edge of that spirit, which he was unable strenuously to wield, yet glittered through the worn scabbard of his mortal frame, and would not be drawn. His acting on this night we cannot say was unequalled, for it had been greatly surpassed by the memorable rehearsal of which we have spoken.

The annual dinner, in aid of the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund, having taken place, Elliston, who had been announced for his second appearance in the part of *Falstaff*, on the following evening, prepared for the completion of his efforts. Beyond doubt, considerable interest had been excited in the dramatic circles by this novel undertaking, and a report of the famous rehearsal having, by this time, become a topic of theatrical gossip, a numerous party was assembled on the occasion.

Elliston, though labouring under extreme debility, resolutely avoided his old *restaurant* and its usurious effects, wine. He ate little, for, alas, he

could do no more, and a single glass of Madeira was the only *appui* to the night's enterprise ! His energies were fully and successfully displayed in the two first acts of the tragedy, so fully, that he unfortunately drew on the whole amount, while expenditure was still necessary. As he proceeded he weakened, and gave most distinct signs of inadequate strength even to sustain the struggle. The fifth act had commenced, and in his scene with the *Prince of Wales*, as he was approaching the orchestra, he fell bodily on the stage, through utter exhaustion. This was the last night that Elliston ever appeared on the boards of Drury Lane Theatre.

We have never attempted to justify Elliston's irregularities, or to veil his errors, but the general report of his ebriety on this occasion was totally without foundation. False, however, as it was, he had to thank rather the reputation he had too wilfully acquired, for the insinuations in question, than public prejudice ; as some characters may lay to their account, not to be believed though they do speak the truth. The "*John Bull*," in noticing this event, tartly observed, that " Elliston fell off in the fourth act, and fell down in the fifth." As monarch of Drury, Elliston, farewell !—yet was he one—

" Who ventured all his fortunes at a cast,
And fought, like Hannibal, to fall at last."

Two days after the above event, as Elliston was musing—perhaps occupying himself in vain regrets—the usual hall porter tapped at his door panel and announced a stranger. Before the manager had power either to deny himself or permit an interview, the said stranger was in his presence; for he had passed, unnoticed, at the messenger's heels, through the mazy windings of "behind the scenes." Elliston looked with some little astonishment, for verily the intruder was of a habit to excite it. He was a tall man, with long, black, but scanty hair. His shirt-collar was of very large dimensions, one side of which positively covered his cheek, and the other, beaten down, lay over a loose, wry-tied neck-cloth. He wore a green coat, and waistcoat of the same colour, both of which were liberally adorned by gilt basket-buttons; a pair of grey tight pantaloons and high shoes, completed his costume.

"Mr. Elliston!" cried he, abruptly seating himself, whilst he thrust out his legs from the chair, and plunged his hands into his two capacious pockets—"Mr. Elliston, have I the pleasure of beholding you—of speaking to you—to you, who from my boyhood, have given me such high intellectual delight? My name, sir, is Gordon."

The manager replied, with a look which seemed to say, "I see no just cause or impediment to the contrary." The stranger proceeded—

"My name is Gordon, Mr. Elliston. I have

gazed on you—wondered at you—thought of you, for many and many a day ; but this is the first of my happiness in knowing you. My name is Gordon.”

The manager still held silence.

Mr. Gordon went on : “ Any man but you, Mr. Elliston, might think my address strange ; but you are a strange man yourself, and must not be surprised, if, now and then, you meet with a subject of as eccentric a fancy as your own. But my name is Gordon ; and, I trust, that is sufficient for any other questions which yet may follow.”

Still was the manager mute.

“ Mr. Elliston,” continued the other, in a more temperate key, “ you have for years been before the town, the first comedian of your day. You are now at the head of a great theatrical concern, which, I grieve to believe, is no longer a flourishing speculation. Would a sum of money be useful to you ?”

“ Sir !” responded Elliston, with a look of inquiry.

“ Would a sum of money, I say, be useful to you ?” repeated the visitor—“ my name is Gordon.”

“ To say that a sum of money would not be useful, even under more prosperous circumstances than the present, to one having such responsibilities as mine,” responded Elliston, “ would be at least to assert an improbability—but why this question ?”

“ Because my name is Gordon.”

Elliston, not at once perceiving the logical inference, was again silent.

“ Would ten thousand pounds be useful to you?”

“ Ten thousand pounds!”

“ Ay, Mr. Elliston!—ten thousand pounds; and you shall have them. You know my name—Gordon.”

The manager was now pretty well convinced that the term eccentricity was the mildest which might fairly be applied to the interrogator before him; and quietly replied, that it was a question he did not feel himself justified in favouring.

“ How now!” rejoined the other, starting from his chair—“ I have known you, sir, these twenty years—have witnessed your merits, and now learn your necessities; don’t stick at fifteen thousand,” added he, in an impressive whisper.

“ The munificence of your offer, Mr. Gordon—”

“ Ay, my name is Gordon,” interrupted the animated stranger, as he seized the manager eagerly by the hand—“ my name is Gordon. Harkye! I will exact but one promise from you at this moment, and that positively I must have. Will you breakfast with me to-morrow morning—to-morrow morning, ten o’clock, Mr. Elliston—at Ibbotson’s Hotel?”

The manager hesitated.

“ Come!” continued Mr. Gordon—“ this pro-

mise, absolutely I must have—Ibbotson's Hotel, ten o'clock."

"I will, sir,"—responded Elliston—"I will wait on you by this appointment."

"Good morning." Mr. Gordon now moved towards the door; the manager attending him. They were now passing towards the hall, when Mr. Gordon demanded, who and what the person might be, who was just then standing near to them?

"The prompter to this establishment, Mr. Wilmot," responded the manager.

On hearing which, the visiter made a rush towards the worthy official, into whose hands he suddenly thrust ten sovereigns, and assuring him his name was Gordon, without another word departed from the theatre.

Elliston now began to feel much anxiety on this most singular interview, and Wilmot, very properly being desirous of immediately abandoning his claim to the ten sovereigns, delivered them into Elliston's hands, the latter being now resolved to be faithful to his appointment, the next morning, at Ibbotson's Hotel.

At five minutes before the hour appointed, Elliston was in Vere Street, and demanding to be shown by the waiter to Mr Gordon's apartment, up he went, and, on entering the room, perceived the breakfast-table suitably arranged for two persons; but Mr. Gordon was not visible.

The manager took up the *Times* newspaper. In about five minutes his ears were saluted by a kind of triumphal shout, and presently Mr. Gordon himself abruptly entered from an inner room, apparently just from his bed, for he was literally in his night attire ; in each hand he held bank-bills to a considerable amount, which he now sported in the wind.

“ Here they are !—here they are, Mr. Elliston!—a small dividend only at present ; but don’t stick at twenty thousand !” exclaiming which, he scattered the money in various parts of the room.

The malady of Mr. Gordon seemed rather to have gathered strength since their meeting of the day before. His manner was more wild, and the untired state in which he appeared, still added to the manager’s dilemma. But Mr. Gordon still went on after the same style—tossing the notes ; repeating his own name ; and assuring the manager of his permanent friendship.

Elliston was now in downright alarm, and rang the bell with some violence. As the door opened, ‘ The trembling notes ascend the sky.’

Elliston advanced to the waiter, and, in a few words, explained the history of the present adventure. The master of the house was called—the waifs and estrays were collected together and confided to his custody. The ten pounds, which had been so strangely forced on Wilmot, were also given up ; and Mr. Gordon having, in the interim,

retired to his inner apartment, Elliston, after a little further explanation of the strange occurrences of yesterday, made the best of his way from Ibbotson's Hotel.

From that moment the manager heard no more from his friend Mr. Gordon ; but he was at some pains in making inquiries respecting him. It appeared that the present wild exhibition was by no means the first that Mr. Gordon had d'splayed. His connexions were of the highest respectability, and his means considerable, and, when under the influence of mental attacks, he would make these profusive offers, at the suggestion of the moment. Without doubt, he had often encountered less scrupulous friends than the manager of Drury Lane Theatre.

A general meeting of the committee was now summoned on the affairs of Drury Lane Theatre, and the circumstances of the lessee ; two days previously to which, Mr. Calcraft called on Elliston, advising him to announce his intention of withdrawing from the theatre, on grounds of ill health and increasing infirmity ; but this, Elliston rejected with extreme acrimony. On the 27th of May, the meeting took place, and the result was a demand that Elliston should pay up his arrears, amounting to 5500*l.*, within *three* days. Such were the terms—such the consideration granted to a man, who, on the statements of this very committee, had laid out nearly 30,000*l.* in rebuilding, improving, and deco-

rating their property — to one who, as lessee, had paid 66,000*l.* rent out of 71,000*l.* *

At the expiration of the three days, Elliston attended the adjourned meeting. He offered proposals from a committee of his creditors, who were ready to give security for the amount still owing ; but the committee of Drury Lane would accept nothing “ but their bond.”

*Elliston erected the portico in Brydges Street, which must be admitted was a necessary appendage to the theatre, whatever may be said of its deficiency in grace. It was completed under the sole direction and design of Sir John Soane, and cost Elliston, £ 1,050

He rebuilt the whole of the interior of the theatre, from the bare walls, which he was bound to do at the expense of 6000*l.*; the contract was made for 7000*l.* The stage, as compared with Covent Garden, was very unequal to scenic representation ; this he greatly improved by opening large recesses on each side of the stage ; without which, those magnificent dioramas, which originated with him, and have not been, or are likely to be excelled, could never have been effected ; the rebuilding of the theatre and improving the stage amounted to, 21,000

The saloon he lined with looking-glass, at the expense of 1,000

23,050

Deduct the sum he was compelled to lay out . . . 6,000

17,050

From that take his deficiency of rent 5,500

And the theatre will be indebted to Elliston . . . £11,550

Elliston paid the committee, during his seven years' lesseeship, upwards of *sixty-six thousand pounds*.

“Theatre Royal, Drury Lane,

“3rd June, 1826.

“ Copy of the Resolutions of the General Committee, passed this day, were ordered to be transmitted to R. W. Elliston, Esq.

“ Present :

“ JOHN CALCRAFT, Esq., Chairman.

WM. LINLEY, Esq.

SIR EDWARD CODRINGTON, Bart.

BENJ. OAKLEY, Esq.

WM. CHURCH, Esq.

SIR GEORGE BROWNE, Bart.

G. H. ROBINS, Esq.

THE HON. DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

“ Elliston, being in attendance, was called in, and requested to state, whether he was prepared to discharge the debt due to the proprietors.

“ Mr. Elliston stated, that he was not prepared to pay the debt, and, after explaining to the meeting the great expenditure he had made upon the theatre, and the claims he thought he had to the favourable consideration of the committee, left it to them to act towards him and the theatre as they may think right in justice to the proprietors.

“ Resolved,—That the lease being forfeited, in consequence of Mr. Elliston not complying with the terms of the notice to him, to pay the debt due to the proprietors, measures be immediately taken to re-let the theatre, by sealed tenders, and that

such tenders, addressed to the secretary, be delivered before Saturday, the 17th instant, at twelve o'clock at noon, when the same will be opened by the committee.

“ W. DUNN, Secretary.”

At this meeting, Elliston having been called in, stood forward, and, in an animated address, remarked, that as it was impossible, when he first entered the room, to know what progress had been made with regard to the concerns of the theatre, or what arguments would be advanced by the chairman, he had come totally unprepared to meet the observations which had fallen from that gentleman. He felt too much embarrassed, as any man must who had to speak with reference to his own affairs. This was the excuse he had to offer for the state in which he found himself on attempting to address them. The meeting had been told by Mr. Calcraft, and truly so, that a great expenditure had been made upon that theatre. That fact had been always known and confessed by the public. The deficiencies under which it laboured at the beginning of last season, were by no means proportioned to the very great expenditure that had taken place since he (Mr. Elliston) had undertaken the direction of the theatre.

He had entered upon that speculation with a feeling of ambitious pride, desirous of raising the

theatre from the greatest difficulties to the highest splendour. This object he had endeavoured to attain by an expenditure which, though lavish in apparent amount, was not, he trusted, misapplied as to taste. When he commenced his undertaking, he found the theatre most destitute. There was no stage, no side room for scenery, and, what was worse, no scenery. True it was, that he found timber, but no painting that could properly be procured. At that time complaints were loud, that a new theatre was wanting, adapted, both as to size and shape, to the convenience of the public. For those reasons he determined to rebuild the theatre.

It was calculated, that the expense of this undertaking would not exceed 7000*l.*, but it appeared that the artist was misguided in forming his estimate, and that the tradesmen had underrated the price of their labour. The result was, that he had expended 22,000*l.*, added to which, there ought to be a charge of 1100*l.*, making altogether 23,100*l.* He had the power, and it was a duty he owed to his family, to make known to the world what were his claims on their future attention. He had also made a side-room for the scenery, and stocked both the wardrobes. He thought himself fully warranted in saying, that if he had not left it the first theatre, there was no second better than it in the kingdom, and he be-

lieved he might add, not in Europe. He was perfectly contented, that any six gentlemen should, with any of his creditors, go through Mr. Dunn's book, and ascertain what he had expended in the improvement of the property of the theatre. He was confident that the whole sum, first and last, would not fall short of 50,000*l*. He pledged his integrity on that result.

Providence, however, had inflicted a severe illness upon him, and obliged him to retire from the active discharge of his duty, which, by the advice of Mr. Calcraft, was devolved upon his eldest son. He denied that the last season had not been properly provided with new pieces. He had in his possession the correspondence which would prove that he had taken every precaution to gratify the public taste for novelty; but his ill state of health had unfortunately deprived him of the advantages he had hoped to possess. He felt no disposition to say harsh things of those gentlemen, who, he was sure, would gladly have served him. He came there to heal wounds, not to make them. That must be his wish, because he came to ask nothing for himself. All that he desired was, to promote the interest of his creditors. Their behaviour to him had been exemplary and kind to the utmost degree. When he obtained the letter of licence, he was in great difficulties, from which they had released him.

They had not only given him time for their own claims; but they had bought up debts to the extent of eleven or twelve hundred pounds belonging to those whose feelings were not equally friendly with their own. He knew perfectly well that they had been enabled to serve him in this respect, by the liberality of the committee who had lent them 500*l.* for that purpose.

When he first entered the room, he had heard it surmised that the extra rent paid by the new lessee would be offered to his creditors in security for the debts he had incurred by his great expenditure on the theatre. It was known that he had little or no property besides what he had embarked in that undertaking. His creditors were aware that he would cheerfully use his abilities, and sell whatever he might have for their benefit. Their anxiety to assist him had led them to make an effort to keep the theatre in their own hands. The failure of that effort was the only complaint he had to make. He had hoped, that when the respectability of their names was considered, their proposal to continue the lease on the terms on which he had taken the theatre, would have been accepted. Whatever profit had been made would have been divided between them and himself, and he had no doubt, that by proper economy, not by parsimony as to talent, but by the due regulation of inferior charges, the enterprise

would have been rendered prosperous. In that case, he would have paid every creditor twenty shillings in the pound. He supposed, however, that it was now decided that no such thing should be, and he must, he knew, bow to that decision. [Elliston paused for a moment, as if under the influence of some strong emotion.]

As he observed that what he said was taken down for publication, it was not unfit that he should state, as he would without hesitation, feeling what he was going to utter was the solemn truth, that, since he had been in possession of that theatre, there had been a systematic attempt, on the part of the public press, to depreciate every person and thing connected with it. He spoke with due submission to the press, whose powers he felt and appreciated. It was, he knew, a strong body, and he was but a weak individual. But he would not be deterred from saying that a thousand ridiculous and malicious reports had issued against him from that source. He had not attempted to struggle with such a host. He had hoped that the hostility of the press would wear out in time ; but he was constrained to declare that it had not. It was with pain that he touched upon this subject ; but, as he had been compelled to allude to it, he would ask the gentlemen he then saw present from the press, what he had not done to merit the public approbation ? What talent had he not obtained, from

Catalani downwards? He had corresponded with Sir Walter Scott and Mr. Thomas Moore, for the purpose of prevailing upon them to write for the drama—but they were afraid. What he could do, he had done. Let the proprietors look at the scenery—the works of Stanfield, Roberts, and Marinari. What had he left neglected for the amusement and gratification of the public? Why, then, he asked, were those attacks levelled at him by the public press? Some of them had been aimed at his officers.

He was happy, that the theatre was likely to fall into the hands of a gentleman highly respectable, both in point of wealth and character, and that it would be his intention to continue his (Mr. Elliston's) officers. The first he would name in desert and rank was Mr. Winston; the other he would also particularly mention was Mr. Dunn. He knew their value, and he declared, that so convinced was he of the importance of their services, that if it had led to his ruin, he would have adhered to them. All the capital he had traded with was gone. His private fortune, which had been good, was absorbed also, yet he wanted nothing for himself.

He hoped his refusal to accept any allowance from the proprietors would be ascribed to no improper or unruly pride; but, he assured them he could not lie in his bed, or take his meals with satisfaction, if he felt that he was subsisting on

charity. He yet had some health, strength, and his humble talents. Those he would exert, and by them he would live.

It might happen that to America he should direct his steps, and singular would it be if he should find in that distant land, the asylum and independence which he had sought for in vain in England. What the proprietors might do for his creditors he would acknowledge with gratitude. "If (continued Elliston) you should hereafter think of doing anything further on my account, I beg it may be for that young man, (alluding to his son, Mr. W. Gore Elliston,) who has devoted himself to my interest, who has mortgaged his property, and given up his legacies. That would indeed be grateful to my feelings; but, for myself, I desire nothing—I will accept nothing. Go where I may, I shall carry with me a loyal heart; and I feel that there is not in my bosom one spark of enmity towards those who have endeavoured to oppress me. I will supplicate the blessings of Heaven on my native land, and offer up my daily hopes for the prosperity of this establishment."

Mr. Douglas Kinnaird said, that after the extremely proper address made by Mr. Elliston, he could not avoid taking the first opportunity of expressing his hope that an early day might be named for the meeting anticipated by the chairman, to

consult as to the manner in which the surplus rent should be disposed of. As Mr. Elliston had so honourably and so honestly declared his wish to identify his interests with those of his creditors, there should be only one limit to the liberality of the proprietors—that duty to themselves, which bound them to appropriate a small portion to the payment of the interest of the debt owing by the theatre. If all the proprietors could be present, it might be quite fair to pass what vote they pleased, but considering that in many instances, they acted as trustees for infants, and others unable to attend their meetings, he thought this limitation necessary. He trusted that the statement of Mr. Elliston's misfortunes and services might not pass from their memory, and regretted that all the proprietors had not been present to hear it.

The members of the general committee then withdrew.

The Napoleon of Drury would now have abdicated in favour of his son ; but the allied powers of the committee were too powerfully in arms to listen to any treaty in favour of the family of the de-throned monarch, and thus received the affairs of the theatre under their own protection. But of this committee, we fear, it could not be said, as of Peter the Great, that tyranny and usurpation were forgotten in the virtue and vigour of their government.

Injustice to the lessee was followed by incompetency to their own business.

On the 15th of June, Drury Lane Theatre was publicly advertised for letting.*

In September, Spring, the box-keeper, received a letter from Kean, it contained only a few, but emphatic words :—" If Drury Lane is to be let, I must have it. I have 12,000*l.* If you get it for me, you shall be great. I have written to Calcraft. I shall be at New York in November—at Boston, in December—in the other months, H—I knows where !"†

The habit of Elliston, at this period of his career, was to return to Stratford Place, at about three o'clock A.M., after vespers ; and too frequently in

* On the 24th of the same month the theatre was let to Mr. Thomas Bish, who, repenting of his engagement within a very few days, paid his forfeiture and retired. The theatre has since been let to various tenants, and the rent gradually reduced to 5000*l.*

† Why Kean concluded his very elegant epistle to Sam Spring, by which name he was *only* known, with *H—I knows where*, requires explanation. Spring was not only a box-keeper, but a *hell*-keeper, to which circumstance Kean alluded. Spring, at his death left all his savings to a female relative, once on the stage, who some time after requested the advice of a great public character, in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, respecting a *painful difficulty*, as she termed it. "I have too much money," said she, "to walk, and too little to keep a carriage—what am I to do?"—"Get a husband, my dear, and he will support you in any position," replied the adviser. She took both the hint and the man. The gentleman married *eighteen thousand pounds*. The lady is since dead.

that state of perception to which all things in life are matters of indifference. At the offing of Stratford Place he had frequently encountered a little fat, pudgy man who appeared to entertain the same indifference to external things as himself. In plain English, our hero and the little fat unknown had met many times, about the same spot, and under a similar respect for sobriety. Each was to the other a perfect stranger ; but a kind of saturnalian free-masonry seemed to exist between them—and though they never exchanged a word, yet they as perfectly understood one another as though they had conversed together all their lives, and had never lived apart.

As near three of the morning as might be, occasion after occasion, Elliston drunk, had met the little stranger drunk—the sympathetic chord was struck as they passed each other, and they parted, until about the same hour of the following day ; but, as we have just observed, with not the interchange of one syllable.

After, however, some months of this spiritual acquaintance, they, on a certain morning, met as usual—the same spot—the same common state. The little man made an abrupt halt, and gazing on Elliston with a steadiness, by which drunkenness is sometimes invested, marched solemnly up to him, and clasping him by the arm, exclaimed—“ Old fellow, this can’t last for ever!”—

which having said, without waiting for reply or comment, he staggered off;—and though frequently after this, meeting Elliston in the old way, he never exhibited the least indication of improving the acquaintance, and the silent system once again took possession of the friends.

On the 26th of November, 1826, Elliston's trustees, to whom he had made over all his entire property, effected a sale on the premises, Stratford Place. The two magnificent suits of armour, which might have "stood against the world," were knocked down for one hundred pounds.

On the 10th of December, Robert William Elliston, of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, and Leamington, dealer and chapman, appeared in the character of bankrupt.

"Non minus est virtus quàm quærere, parta tueri."

But the outcast of Drury Lane, destitute of any resources, and bankrupt in health as in estate, yet found confidence in a populous and enterprising district, to which at this time he was invited by special application, to take an active part in a new project of a theatrical nature.

In consequence of the destruction of the Royalty Theatre (1826) the inhabitants of the eastern district of London were anxious for a restoration of their building, and a renewal of their ancient amuse-

ments. At their suggestion, Mr. Hammick addressed a letter to Elliston, inviting him to a co-operation in their design, and offering him the most flattering encouragement. It was proposed the theatre should be raised by eighty shares of one hundred pounds each ; transferable annuities, secured on the building and bearing interest. Thirty shares were at once taken, on the general belief that Elliston was to be in the place of management, and there was every prospect of a speedy realization of the measure.

When, however, Elliston came to London, other meetings having taken place, a spot still more eligible than the one which had been selected, was determined on ; namely, Chamber Street, Leaman Street. It was proposed to raise 12,000*l.* for the building, by transferable renters' shares of 500*l.* and 100*l.* each, bearing interest at five per cent., for the whole term—the 500-pound shares entitling the holder to a life admission, and one nomination for every hundred-pound share—transferable once a year—the trustees were William Curtis, Esq., Rowland Stephenson, Esq., M.P., and John Coope, Esq.—the theatre to be under the control and management of Mr. Elliston — “ whose high professional talents and ability in management offer the best pledge for its permanent prosperity and eminence.”

Seven thousand pounds were very rapidly subscribed—the plans were greatly approved, and ex-

hibited considerable talent in the architect, Mr. Charles Elliston. The theatre was to open in the following October.

In the early part of March, the lease of the Chamber Street speculation was sub demised to Elliston, at an improved rent of 1200*l.* a year—out of which was to be paid the ground-rent of 200*l.*; to Miss Steele, 180*l.* a year, as a compensation; the debentures, amounting to 600*l.* a year; and the insurance. Several gentlemen, who were inclined to assist the undertaking, expressed their fears of their liability, in the event of the funds specifically applicable to the completion of the theatre not being found sufficient, and for debts contracted, not only for that purpose, but also for the various articles necessary for dramatic representation; upon these points Chitty's opinion was taken, and his decision was, *that in both cases the shareholders would be liable*. This was a death-blow to the speculation.

Maurice and Carruthers, two tradesmen, who had been interested in the late Royalty Theatre, took timely advantage of the above circumstances. Their efforts were directed to the rebuilding of the Royalty; and so heartily did they set to work, that by the 20th of October the new building was actually covered in, (the act of Parliament requiring this before licence could be granted,) but it was not until the 25th of February that the theatre was

opened for performances. On the 28th of February, 1828, the awful and fatal occurrence of the falling of the roof of this new edifice, took place.

On the abandonment of the Chamber Street scheme, Elliston sought refuge from vexation at Leamington Priors, where, in his moments of depression, he would fain, like Wolsey himself, have laid down his bones in quiet; but, on the 18th of May, his thoughts being yet of the earth earthy, he noticed an advertisement in the *Times* newspaper, headed "To be let, the Surrey Theatre." In a moment he felt he had tasted of 'the enchanted herb which did renew old Æson,' and with the activity of five-and-thirty started for the metropolis. Not a moment was lost in pursuance of his object. Interviews were speedily obtained with the Surrey proprietors, or their representatives, and with a few hundred pounds advanced by just as many stanch friends, *sur le champ*, on the old ground, St. George's Fields,—the Assyrian fallen to the Arab, but still a warrior,—behold Robert William once again installed in the principality of the Surrey Theatre.

Elliston not having at this precise time received his certificate, the lease was made out in the name

Elliston's final examination before the Commissioners of Bankrupts took place in March, 1827. The April of the following year, W. G. Elliston and T. Elliston, booksellers, Leamington, appeared in the list of bankrupts.

of his son, Charles Robert. In the meantime, differences having taken place between our hero and West, the lessor, the latter refused to transfer the lease according to promise, when the certificate was signed in June, 1828.

On Monday, the 21st of May, 1827, (before we entirely bid adieu to Drury Lane,) a new tragedy was produced, called “ Ben Nazir, the Saracen ;” it was to have appeared on the 17th, but postponed, Kean being imperfect, though he had the part a considerable time, and greatly approved of it. This play was certainly most unfortunate in its progress. It was delayed till a late period of the season, owing to various circumstances. The reader of plays made great havoc in the dialogue, which coming to the knowledge of the Hon. George Lamb, who had read the play in Elliston’s time, he spoke to his friend, the Duke of Devonshire, then lord chamberlain, on the subject ; the duke sent for Colman, who told his grace that he need not give himself the trouble of reading the piece, for he had cut out *every objectionable* sentence ; but the duke being determined to judge for himself, would read it ; and then informed his deputy that he saw no objection to those parts which had been expunged, and ordered them to be restored. By the delay of the licence and Kean’s imperfectness, the author, who resided near Boulogne, was kept in town a considerable time, having no other business than the bringing out of his play.

Kean did not attend the last rehearsal, and at the few previous ones, if he did attend, he merely read the character from his manuscript: not five minutes before the play should have commenced he was walking backwards and forwards on the stage, in his street dress, and when reminded of the time, his reply was—"I cannot play to-night—I do not know a line—I am ready to drop with fatigue." With difficulty he was persuaded to dress, and the play was delayed till nearly half-past seven.

In one scene, where the chief interest lay, Kean cut out five and a half pages of the dialogue, and with it *the whole of the plot*; in another scene, in which great expectation had been raised, and for which, a portrait of the heroine was painted—Kean had to apostrophize to the likeness, in a soliloquy of some length, on which the author had erected his best hopes. Kean entered on one side of the stage—paused, looked at the portrait—hesitated, as if attempting to recollect what he ought to have said—and, in a tone scarcely audible, muttered—"Charming maid! most amiable of thy sex; thou art more chaste than fair!" and off he went on the other side.

It was in this manner he went through his scenes; *he did not know one word of his part*; and the tragedy, which was acted in about two hours, was finally condemned. Kean was frequently hissed

during the performance. The curtain fell amidst the hootings and indignation of the audience.

The author, who had taken his station in a private box, came behind the scenes, when the curtain fell, and seeing Kean's agitated state, took him by the hand, in the kindest manner, saying, he regretted the event, far more on the actor's account than his own. The author, however, has, in some of his recent publications given the real cause of the failure of "Ben Nazir," and his disappointment on that occasion.

Kean's faculties were so impoverished by his excesses, that the power of studying had utterly left him.

CHAPTER XVI.

Once again at the Surrey — Pseudonymous communication — The sweeps — An adventure at a coachmaker's — A drive home — Lord Dudley's letter — Elliston's new abode — Housewarming and parting dinner — Speeches and songs — Wine and wit — Maria Von Weber — "Sylvana," an opera — The shilling orders — An injunction — The "Flying Dutchman" — A scene at the Surrey — A British tar — Elliston's addresses — Pierce Egan — Would-be-authors — A kangaroo — Elliston's state of health — New projects — A seat in parliament — A second marriage broken off — A Surrey actor — His curious history — A letter of Elliston to his children — Elliston's extraordinary constitution — Fresh frailties — Again rallies — His last efforts — Death — Character.

THE company which Elliston was enabled to collect for the Surrey Theatre was extremely good. He refitted the interior of the house with much taste, and effected considerable improvements in all departments of the building. The scenery he found in a very dilapidated state, on which exigency he engaged Mr. Marshall, a young artist, who had been a pupil of Marinari, and had practised in the painting-room of Drury Lane Theatre with those accomplished masters, Stanfield and Roberts. Marshall was a young man of considerable genius, to which he added industry and attention ; so that

within a very few years he was enabled to take a lead in his profession.*

A numerous audience witnessed the opening of the Surrey Theatre, on Whit-Monday, 1827. Elliston appeared in the fantastic, triune character of the *Singles*, and his public greeting, on this night, was as warm and enthusiastic as on any previous event of his dramatic life. At the close of the piece he stepped forward to make his speech; a circumstance which his friends as fully expected as any part of the night's entertainment which had been advertised in the bills, and a treat which he seldom niggardly bestowed; like fleecy clothing, it was never out of season—salutary at all temperatures; for whether applause or disapprobation, Elliston's speech was always a case in point. He said he "had been woefully curtailed of his proportions since last he met them; his fortune wasted—his stage reduced—his privileges diminished—all things had dwindled, but—his heart, and that was overflowing with gratitude."

It was at this time, under Elliston's management at the Surrey, that the singularly clever and

* The whole scenic department at Covent Garden Theatre, under the reign of Macready, was entrusted to the hands of Mr. Marshall. At the revival of "Henry the Fifth," Marshall greatly distinguished himself by his masterly view of "Old Southampton by Moonlight," and also by the last scene in that play. To the patronage of Elliston at the time alluded to above, Marshall owes a great portion of his early success.

well-conducted boy, Master Burke, made his first public appearance. His attraction at the Surrey was considerable. Elliston had engaged the lad at a salary of 600*l.* per annum, with the view of taking him a provincial tour during the time the Surrey Theatre might be closed ; a project which was never carried into effect, the health of Elliston again declining, before the termination of the boy's first Blackfriars' season.

Young Burke, when first introduced to Elliston, was extremely small of his age—and on his father observing to the manager, he was a very acute lad. “Why, yes,” replied Elliston, fixing his eyes on the little figure—“if brevity be the soul of wit, he is indeed so.”

Managers of theatres, as we have frequently said, have a most extensive corresponding circle, comprehending many mysterious friends, and not rarely urging complaints and seeking redress. Amongst the various letters Elliston received at this period of his career, we cannot forbear inserting the following :—

“August 10th, 1827.

“SIR,—I really must beg to call your attention to a most abominable nuisance which exists in your house, and which is in a great measure the cause of the minor theatres not holding the rank they should amongst playhouses. I mean the admission of

sweeps into the theatre, in the very dress in which they climb chimneys. This not only incommodes ladies and gentlemen, by the obnoxious odour arising from their attire, but these sweeps take up twice the room of other people, because the ladies, in particular, object to their clothes being soiled by such unpleasant neighbours. I have, with my wife, been much in the habit of visiting the Surrey Theatre, and, on three occasions, we have been annoyed by these sweeps. People will not go, sir, where sweeps are; and you will find, sooner or later, these gentlemen will have the whole theatre to themselves, unless an alteration be made. I own, at some theatres, the managers are too particular in dress—those days are passed, and the public have a right to go to theatrical entertainments in their morning costumes, but this ought not to include the sweeps. It is not a week ago since a lady in a nice white gown, sat down on the very spot which a nasty sweep had just quitted, and, when she got up, the sight was most horrible—for she was a very heavy lady and had laughed a good deal during the performance; but it was no laughing matter to her when she got home. I hope I have said quite enough, and am your

“WELL-WISHER.”

Success having attended Elliston and his Surrey undertaking, during the course of many weeks; and fortune appearing really in earnest once again

to inscribe him in her good books, the soul of our hero (for a hero he must be to the end) expanded with his new opening prospects. One morning, after a rehearsal of "Who wants a Guinea?" (for comedies were cut down into two acts, like men of war into frigates,) Elliston, with a right ducal air, or, what was more pregnant, his own appropriate manner, advancing to his stage manager, said—"West, I wish you to accompany me to Great Queen Street."

"Certainly; but on what business, sir?"

"You shall see—step into my calash—it is at the door." West readily obeyed, and within three minutes the companions were on their passage. Having reached Queen Street, the vehicle stopped at Birch's the coachmaker, when Elliston, stepping out, beckoned West to follow. By this time Mr. Birch himself had advanced to meet the comedian.

"My carriage, Mr. Birch?" was Elliston's prompt inquiry.

"Here—here it is—and nothing, I believe, left undone;" saying which, Birch opened the door of a most elegant landau, for the purpose of displaying the same with all its appointments. Elliston and his companion, having gazed on this work of art for a few minutes in silent admiration, the comedian, with an air of humour which would baffle all power of description, said, "West, step in with me," and, at the same time entering the landau, deposited himself

comfortably in a corner. "Perfect!—admirable!"—continued he, "and how easy!"

"A positive feather-bed," replied West.

"It is, as you say, West, a feather-bed," continued Elliston, dancing the springs with the whole weight of his body. "Birch, you'll step in too?"

"If you wish it, certainly," replied the smiling coachmaker, and Birch immediately took his seat opposite his two visitors.

"Now close the door," cried Elliston to one of the workmen in attendance, "we shan't want you any more. I really never travelled in so easy a carriage in my life," continued the manager, addressing rather himself than his companions—"not the slightest jolt; and the stuffing of these squabs is positively the mould of the human form—admirable—delightful indeed!" and he once again commenced testing the springs. Birch considering by this time he had been imprisoned long enough, looked imploringly from the window for one of his workmen, when Elliston, turning slyly to his faithful stage-manager, whispered, "Make the most of it, my good fellow; it is probably the last ride we shall ever have in the landau—don't go, West." By this time Birch had contrived, by passing his arm from the window, to open the door himself, and was in the act of stepping out, when West observed that, as it was necessary for him to call on a colour-man in Holborn, he would take the opportunity of

running up. "Well advised," said Elliston ; and off went the highly amused stage-manager.

Birch, happy in his release, took advantage of the moment to attend the demands of some more profitable customer, and West pursued his way to the tradesman's habitation in Holborn. In about three quarters of an hour, the business being transacted, the deputy-manager returned to Queen Street, when, immediately making inquiries for Mr. Elliston, was told, to his great surprise, that he had left the house, a full half hour before. "Impossible !" said West ; "gone, you say ; which way ?" At this moment, a prolonged and very audible snore, proceeding from the interior of the new landau, occasioned West to turn in that direction, and advancing to the window of the carriage, beheld Elliston in as fast a sleep as ever harassed and fatigued mortal had enjoyed.

Still further amused at the eccentricity of the Surrey potentate, West now proceeded to rouse his master, when Elliston, thus suddenly awakened, and seeing his deputy at the door, exclaimed—"Ah, West, I'm glad you're at home ! I've just driven over to you, for I wish to see you of all things ; but, just step in, will you ?" "No, no, not again," replied West, laughing. "Come, sir, we had better return ; saying which, he commenced handing the Surrey manager from his comfortable position, who being now fully brought to his senses, stepped out

with the same air of majesty with which he had entered. The two now took their departure—not a word was interchanged for a considerable time ; when, about the centre arch of Westminster Bridge, Elliston turned suddenly about, and said, “ West, I’m satisfied ; but ’tis our last drive.”

True, indeed, were Elliston’s words, for the landau was never removed from the premises of Birch. The carriage had been ordered prior to Elliston’s bankruptcy, when he was still manager of Drury Lane Theatre. The work subsequently had been suspended, but resumed within the last month.

Elliston having made application to Lord Dudley on behalf of his eldest son, who had recently returned home from the university, his lordship made the following reply :—

“ February 5th, 1828.

“ SIR,—Though I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, still I should be happy to be of use to the son of a person to whose professional labours and distinguished talents I am no stranger. It is, therefore, with particular concern, that I find myself unable to offer to you any encouragement as to the object of your application.

“ In the first place, there is no actual vacancy in the employment of messenger, nor any such probability of one, as would justify me in making an eventual promise. But that is not all. The notion,

which has, I observe, somehow or other gained ground—without, however, my being able to account for its origin—that the king’s messengers were in future to be chosen from among persons of a superior description, is wholly unfounded. The situation, so far as I know, has never been yet filled by any person with the habits and education of a gentleman. The emolument, though not great, might be a temptation to a person having no other provision, and the fatigue and trouble are not greater than are undergone in some very honourable professions: but, in these matters, opinion is everything, and I can assure you that a young man bred at Trinity College would lose caste by taking such an office.

“ If a change were made in the description of persons employed, it must be at a general sweep. The situation of the only gentleman in such an employment would be quite intolerable.

“ I have entered into these explanations in order to convince you that I have not lightly refused your request, or without bestowing on it due consideration. I remain, sir,

“ Your obedient humble servant,

Dudley.

“ R. W. Elliston, Esq.”

Elliston having obtained his certificate, in June, 1828, quitted his temporary lodgings adjoining the theatre, and entered on an excellent family-house in Great Surrey Street, Blackfriars Road, which he furnished in a consistent and complete style. Here he was enabled once more to call his friends around him—old friends who had travelled with him much of the journey of life—who had witnessed his rise, had done honour to his fairly-acquired fame, but who had never been sparing of their censure and disdain when his actions too frequently provoked their just expression. Amongst these were Major Wathen, Mr. Durrant, and Mr. Winston, in whom our hero never could have wanted the best advice and the most friendly consideration. He knew their worth, but his fortitude! alas, was less than a shade.

Elliston now played out his best and strongest card which Fortune appeared to have dealt to him, in this his last mortal rubber of the Thespian game. "Black-eyed Susan" was the honour in his hand, which, sustained by the "*Jack*" (T. P. Cooke), occasioned him to rise, at the conclusion of the season, a considerable winner. This drama, however, for the first half-dozen nights, though much applauded, did not give promise of the extraordinary success which subsequently attended it. On the second week of its representation, the piece rose like a rocket into the sky of public favour, and became, from that time, a blaze of popular

admiration. The receipts now averaged 500*l.* per week, out of which 150*l.* clear, fell on the profit side of the manager. Cooke's salary was sixty pounds per week, and half a clear benefit in every sixth week of the representation.

Going off the stage on one of these evenings, Major Wathen, who was standing at the "wing," observed, in speaking of one of the *Surinam* actors, "that he was of the *school* of Munden."

"Ay," replied the manager; "but his proper place there, is on the whipping-block."

Two of Elliston's sons—namely, his eldest and youngest—being at this time on the eve of departure for Hobart Town, with the view of settling in the country as agriculturists, the father fixed a day for assembling, at his house in Great Surrey Street, many of his old and esteemed friends to honour the occasion, and receive in return their best wishes for his children's prosperity.

As this event was to be considered not only a parting dinner between those concerned, but also a house-warming, (as on the same day we mourn a royal demise and hail a kingly accession,) the sentiment which might arise from the first, was expected to find some relief from the boon good fellowship of the latter. But this, at least, was beyond all doubt, Elliston had determined equally to distinguish himself in two characters which he had so voluntarily undertaken.

The banquet (for it was no less) had been ordered at much pains and expense. The table exhibited a little excusable display, in being ornamented by finery, which might have been in more fit positions than on a dining-table—it was all, however, good of its kind. The exhibition might have reminded us of Hugh Kelly, who was accused by Dr. Johnson of a great ostentation of the little plate he possessed, and that, on a certain occasion, an interval between the spoons and pepper-caster was actually supplied by a pair of silver spurs.

The two dining-rooms were thrown into one, and a separate table in each, Elliston himself presiding at the upper and his son Charles at the lower. Each guest had his appointed place, and every plate, contained some motto or conceit happily appropriate to the double occasion. The dinner itself passed off with that cumbrous solemnity which generally attends great events. The buckram of state stood obstinately out from the more natural mould of frank fellowship; but the cloth being removed, Elliston exclaimed, “Are the singers arrived?”

“They are here, sir,” was the reply.

Blewitt then rose from the table, and receiving four or five of the Surinam choristers at the door of the banqueting-room, the party moved to the piano forte; when an ode, expressly written for the occasion, and set to music by Blewitt himself, was

sung by the whole band. The folds of the buckram were greatly crushed by this movement, and the natural man began to portray the best features of its humanity.

With an overflowing cup, and in the gestation of a speech, Elliston was most verily in his element. He rose to address the assembly on the chief purpose of the day—he spoke with much truth on the uncertainty of life, and the still greater miscalculations of human hopes—alluded to his own career, not without some well-timed terms of self-reproach, and finally called on his friends to second the parent's benisons in respect of the two youthful adventurers, who were about to quit them—perhaps for ever. Nature by this time had prevailed over the mock heroic, and the language of parental affection never fell more feelingly from a father's lips than at this moment. His speech invoked the tribute of a tear from those around him—the only water poured out on this memorable occasion. The challenge was accepted by all hearts, and “Huzza! long life and prosperity to them!” sped the parting guests.

William next rose to express his gratitude. He talked of his home endearments—the loved familiar things he was about to leave behind him—like “*Launce* leading his dog.” “’Twill be this hour ere I’ve done weeping.”

The bottle now went about as briskly as a

country-dance after a stately minuet. It was "Sir Roger de Coverley" all round. Blewitt and the singers were again at the orchestra, and some admirable songs succeeded. Elliston was again on his legs. In a kind of prose *improvise*, he had some epigrammatic application for each guest at table, in which the wit of the moment was his first—perhaps his only, consideration; for some of his hits, though no malice prepense, were a little hard, and it was as much as he could effect, in the latter part of the evening, to apply successfully the vulnerary of soft words, and heal the wounded spirit of one of his guests, whom he had downright offended.

Elliston now, in his own peculiar tone, exclaimed, "Charles."

"Father?" was the response.

"How many servants are there below?"

"Six, sir."

"Let each lady and gentleman receive a bottle of wine between them, and partake the same in the housekeeper's room; and do you, Charles, see it done."

"Directly, sir," and off went Charles to execute his father's bidding.

Wine and the song, with scarce an intermission for breathing, brought up the close of the entertainment; and, in consideration of the long voyage the two young men were about to make, the guests were by this time, so far their companions, as to be

more than half over that element which was to sustain them to the shores of New Holland. The parting was indeed final between parent and children : they never met again.

The first musical production of the late Carl Maria Von Weber was performed, for the first time in this country, at the Surrey Theatre. It is entitled "Sylvana"—an opera consisting of three acts, which is attractive more for the merit of the music, and the fame of the composer, than on account of any striking novelty or interest in the plot.

The story, which is not very clearly developed in the piece, comprises little more than the incident of a young lady, who, after having led a strange and solitary life in the forest, by the unaccountable interposition of a hermit, is restored to her parents, persons of noble birth, and to her lover, who has conceived an attachment for her, although in her woodland life she affects to be dumb. This and many other incoherent parts of the piece are forgotten in the rich variety and splendour of the musical composition with which they are associated. The music of "Sylvana," compared with that of "Der Freischutz," approaches more the Italian style, although there are occasional passages resembling "Der Freischutz" and "Oberon."

The *forte* of Weber, however, was in the extremes of his country's music, belonging to what may be

denominated *caricatura*; at least, it was in the expression of passions and incidents, supposed to be least fitted for musical subjects, that he established his reputation. There is the same originality and vigour—the same display of natural and highly-cultivated genius—the same abundance of gay, brilliant, and sparkling combinations in "*Sylvana*," which mark and distinguish the productions of Weber, so popular and familiar in this country.

The performers acquitted themselves with much zeal, and in some instances with much ability. The singing of Miss Graddon was extremely good; but her *soprano* voice and feminine appearance were inappropriate to the martial sounds and sentiments which, as a cavalier, she had to utter. The part was manifestly intended for a powerful tenor voice, and not even could Miss Graddon reconcile us to a transmutation which nature and propriety do not sanction. This lady seemed actually disposed to abdicate her own sex, as she had already usurped the character of *Captain Macheath*, and gone through almost all the male parts of our principal operas. Mr. Philipps played the part of *Albert*—a knight and a lover—and, both by his acting and singing, greatly contributed to the favourable reception of the opera; his musical skill and experience rendered him fully competent to the music of Weber; and his execution of many brilliant passages of that accomplished composer was much applauded.

Mrs. Fitzwilliam played the principal part, *Sylvana*, and sustained it most creditably.

In January, 1828, Mr. T. Dibdin opened Sadler's Wells, for a winter season, and introduced a new plan which answered his purpose, but did incalculable injury to theatrical property. He issued what he denominated a *renter's ticket*, to admit two to the boxes on paying *two shillings* each—the then price of admission to the boxes, being *four shillings*; "thus bad begun, but worse remained behind."

Shortly after, the shop-windows exhibited regular *printed tickets*, to be had, like kisses, for asking, and which admitted two to the *boxes* or *pit*—"this order will only be admitted by each person paying ONE SHILLING, nor admitted to the boxes unless such person be suitably attired—the admission to private boxes, *two shillings and sixpence* each." This was the origin of the *shilling order system* which has done such injury to the theatres—every manager but Elliston felt compelled to adopt it; and he, finding his receipts so much diminished, had nearly fallen into the plan: but his regard for the stage and its professors, prevailed—and though he at first lost considerably by his determination, ultimately he profited by it; and, so sensible were his company of his spirited and disinterested conduct, that the principal performers of his establishment entered into a subscription for a piece of plate to present to their

manager, as a mark of their regard for resisting a system so derogatory to the respectability of the profession. A handsome silver cup was prepared, in the shape of an antique vase, richly embossed, and, on Saturday, the 7th of March, 1829, after the performances were concluded—the curtain rose and discovered a crowded stage, and tables well stored with refreshments. Mr. Elliston was then introduced by Mr. Blewitt and Mr. Rayner—the latter brought forward the cup, and, after a few prefatory words, read from it the following inscription :—

“ Presented to Robert William Elliston, Esq., as a token of respect for his conduct in upholding the respectability of the stage, by resisting the adoption of the system of shilling orders : March 7, 1829.”

On Friday the 16th of October, 1829, the Surrey play-bills announced—

“ INJUNCTION REFUSED BY THE MASTER
OF THE ROLLS.

“ A mistake having occurred in some of the legal technicalities, necessary to confirm the order for the injunction granted, in consequence of the *ex parte* depositions made by Messrs. Yates, Mathews, and Cumberland, Mr. Elliston finds that no injunction has been issued against his performance of what had been usually called *the Adelphi* FLYING DUTCH-

MAN. An investigation therefore took place, in the presence of his Honour, the solicitors for the plaintiffs and defendant, and the defendant in *propria persona*, when, after a long discussion on the merits of the case, the Master of the Rolls distinctly stated, as his opinion, that Messrs. Yates and Mathews had not the title to the exclusive right of performing Mr. Edward Fitzball's burletta of the 'Flying Dutchman.' "

Shortly after, Moncrief's "Flying Dutchman," (written in a few days, when the injunction was first issued) was published with a preface, to which Elliston affixed his name, in which the whole transaction was stated, and as that statement has never been contradicted, the correctness of it could not be doubted.

When Elliston, for this second time in 1828, became lessee of the Surrey Theatre, he had to pay down, before he could take possession, 870*l.* ; that sum having been borrowed, he now returned the same amongst those friends who had so handsomely come forward in the time of need. He had furnished his house at a cost of not less than 500*l.* ; fitted out his two sons for Hobart Town, at an expense of more than 700*l.* ; and also had some heavy family demands to defray ; and last, though not least, he kept a hospitable table. Notwithstanding these drafts upon his purse, at the beginning of 1830, he had placed 2000*l.* in the three per cents.

The assurance, during his frequent visitations of illness, that he should not become an object of charity, reconciled him to his sufferings, and rendered him comparatively at ease. For more than five weeks, in the months of March and April, Elliston did not enter the theatre; during that time, Osbaldiston proposed to him, that if he should be disposed to retire from public life, and transfer to his son and himself his interest in the Surrey Theatre, he would throw into the concern a certain sum, and allow Elliston an annuity for life; but the proposal was not accepted.

On one evening, pending the representation of a very serious piece, a sailor, elevated in every sense of the word, frequently interrupted the progress of the play, and annoyed the audience by exclamations of dissatisfaction and sundry noises peculiar to gentlemen of the sea. At length, Elliston appeared on the stage :

" May I know the cause of this unseemly clamour?" asked he.

(*Woman in the gallery*)—" Soda-water! ginger-beer! "

" Sit down, woman!—Again, I demand the reason of this disturbance?"

(*Voice from the gallery*)—" It's this here sailor what makes the row."

" A British sailor!—the glory of our country's

annals !—the safeguard of our homes and families !
What is it he asks ?”

“ Rule Britannia !” roared the tar.

“ You shall have it !” emphatically pronounced the manager : “ Of what ship, comrade ?”

“ The *Haggermemnon*,” again roared our son of Neptune.

(*Voice from the gallery*)—“ Bottle stout ! ginger-beer !”

“ Woman, I say, sit down !”

“ Just paid off, your honour,” interposed the tar.

“ Bring your companions here on Monday. Ladies and Gentlemen,” continued the manager, advancing a few steps forward, “ On Monday next, a nautical, national, allegorical sketch will be represented at this theatre, entitled, ‘ The British Flag !’ in which the whole strength of the company will be employed. The music expressly composed by Mr. Blewitt. Give ’em ‘ Rule Britannia,’ ” concluded he, with a nod to the musicians. “ Bring ’em on Monday,” cried Elliston once more, with a wink at the sailor, which having given, he strode off the stage.

‘ Rule Britannia’ was immediately sung “ by the whole strength of the company,” and the play was resumed. As to the nautical sketch, it is needless to say, this was the momentary suggestion of the manager’s untiring fancy.

On another evening, too many persons having

been admitted to the gallery, occasioned much altercation, and totally prevented the performers from being heard.

Elliston came forward as usual, and thus addressed the audience :

“ Ladies and Gentlemen,—I venture, as a most unobtrusive individual, to take the great liberty of addressing you. It is of rare occurrence that I deem it necessary to place myself in juxta-position with you. (*Noise in the gallery.*) When I said juxta-position, I meant *vis-a-vis*. (*Increased noise in the gallery.*) When I uttered the words *vis-a-vis* ; I meant *contactability*. Now let me tell you that *vis-a-vis* (it is a French term) and *contactability* (which is a truly English term) very nearly assimilate to each other. (*The disturbance above, redoubled.*) Gentlemen !—Gentlemen ! I am really ashamed of your conduct. It is unlike a Surrey audience. Are you aware that I have, in this establishment, most efficient peace-officers at my immediate disposal ? peace-officers, gentlemen, mean persons necessary in time of war. A word to the wise !

“ One word more,” said he, returning : “ if that tall gentleman, in the carpenter’s cap, will sit down (pointing to the pit) the little girl behind him, in red ribbons—you, my love, I mean—will be able to see the entertainment.”

This oration produced the desired effect, and Elliston, after bowing most respectfully, as he always

did when he had made an impudent speech, retired to spend his *afternoon*.

This was whim, and so let it pass ; but, as an example of real dignity towards an audience, it is related that Dufresne, a French actor, speaking on the stage in a low tone of voice, a person in the pit cried out “ Louder !” when Dufresne turned calmly round, replying—“ and you, sir, not so loud.”

The celebrated Pierce Egan having introduced himself, by letter, to the Surrey manager, at the early part of the season, transmitted to him proposals, in various shapes, for furnishing the theatre with dramatic pieces. The variety of his epistolary style was even more remarkable than that of his proposals. Sometimes he wrote with the air of a dashing blade—at others in the burlesque heroic, and occasionally in the terms of a jolly tar. This Protean diction was, doubtless, employed to have its due effect with the manager, who would naturally, after so many examples of versatile humour, be duly sensible of the available quality of Pierce Egan’s fancy and intellectual resources. But whether, like an over-eager witness in our courts of law, the author of “ Life in London” proved too much ; or whether from a positive want of perception on the part of the manager, of his correspondent’s dramatic qualities, is not sufficiently clear ; but true it is, Elliston lent no favourable attention to his applications ; and when at last, Egan forwarded to the manager a

direct specimen of his quality in the stage, it is a "comic sketch." all doubt was at an end. In Elington, under his own self-named, requesting that all further correspondence might be stopped. For the manager was perfectly persuaded that the friend Egan, was not precisely an author. who like Sophocles, would have been acquitted at court. by merely reading one of his own plays. but Egan no doubt, felt all the pang of a signed work. indignant—

"That the vast universe too, the world
Should cry up Lovers & stuff, and cry, and weep."

for certainly the manager gave the preference to the productions from other poets.

We believe, however, that a sense of merit in everything. It is not that the British hold and Hopkins had their ideas, which have absolutely carried. But, beyond all question "Tom and Jerry" enjoyed most extraordinary success. — no one can rob Mr. Egan of this — and in a poem "Pan was a god, and Apollo was in love."

Many, innumerable were the young audience who now spread out their tiny wings when the setting sun of our great literary history, some of whom, have since risen to renown, and nearly to Bævius and Marcius, with the same view of plagiarism to this day—

"Stopping the flying quill, thus did I sing, and sing,
Make Helicon & Parnassus my own property,
Whose brains, like my, should never be a day
But by adhering to some regularity and

On a certain morning of this season, a gentleman waited on Elliston, at his house in Great Surrey Street, for the purpose of soliciting an engagement at his theatre. The applicant was a man of ungain and loose appearance, but there was something in his manner of address, that greatly tickled the manager, and Elliston, being just now in mantling spirits, was inclined not to dismiss him hastily, though he had completely made up his mind to have nothing to do with him as an actor.

After listening for some time to the candidate's pretensions on the art of acting, and looking over a long list of managers with whom he had been triumphantly connected, Elliston abruptly stopped him.

"Ay—now, sir, I recollect you well,—it was at that place you played a kangaroo."

"A kangaroo!"

"Ay, a kangaroo; and admirably you did it."

"Sir, believe me, I never acted a kangaroo; I never could have acted a kangaroo."

"You do yourself injustice," continued Elliston, "your versatility is great, and your parts have been numerous; but you cannot have forgotten the kangaroo?"

"Forgotten! Mr. Elliston—a kangaroo! Why, sir, do *you* say I ever acted a kangaroo?" demanded the other, with a thoughtful air.

"I never was more pleased in my life. Norwich was the place; you have acted at Norwich?"

“ Yes, sir—**many, many, many** times. I remember, about the **period** of the battle of Waterloo, we got up a grand Asiatic piece ——”

“ Ay, I knew you had played a kangaroo.”

“ But are you sure, sir, it was I—I who played the kangaroo?”

“ Striking things, incidental to the drama, always make a lasting impression with me ; and your kangaroo I remember as though the event were of yesterday. Let’s see,” continued Elliston, jumping up, and making a grotesque twist of the body—“ it was somehow after this manner in which you did it—no, no—not quite so, either. I can’t exactly make the movement, but it was——”

“ Hold ! hold ! Mr. Elliston,” cried the other, advancing to the middle of the room, and instantly throwing himself into a strange attitude as he balanced himself on one leg—“ if I did, did really play a kangaroo, it was so ;” and he threw out his leg with a plunge which threatened destruction to the furniture around.

“ Ay, ay ! I knew you played the kangaroo,” exclaimed Elliston, “ and when I get up an Asiatic spectacle, I’ll send for you.”

The frame of Elliston had now exhibited fearful evidences of decay. A career of labour and excitement—success and disappointments—an inherent sense of indulgence attendant upon them all ; but

more particularly the day of **reckoning** with his old usurer, Alcohol, which had **evidently** arrived, now made common cause in their demands on Nature's resources, and Elliston was as bankrupt in health, as, two years before, he had been in estate. But the flattering chances of the one were gone for ever. His frame was shattered in every bolt and seam. The elasticity of limb was no more, and a kind of plantigrade step of caution, denoted the thorough disorganized condition of his animal existence; but the machine yet held together, and the mortal "piece of work" still languidly performed its office.

No longer sea-worthy, he might yet have been laid up in ordinary, and in the harbour of repose have floated a few years longer, a model, by his precept and advice, to young dramatic venturers, who were some day to breast the tides of public estimation. But repose, which had never made part with his temperament, was not even courted at the parting hour of his strength: so that he still went borrowing on, as long as the old usurer would lend, paying the enormous interest of days, for the paltry loan of an hour's enjoyment which wine afforded.

It was at this very period, that this most eccentric and extraordinary man contemplated two of the greatest projects of his life; visionary and wild as they were, he yet followed them up for a time, with an ardour which puzzled all physiological experience, as it excited more and more disinterested regrets—

a second marriage was the one, and a seat in parliament the other.

His senatorial dream was a vision of no mean character. Neither as the tool of a party, nor as the nominee of a patron, did he look for his appearance on the stage of St. Stephen's; but with the proceeds of "Black-eyed Susan," and the richer sum of his personal endowments, he purposed canvassing some western borough, and was actually in correspondence with parliamentary agents on the question. *Surrey* certainly he had twice represented, and was still a sitting member; and had the franchise been extended, at this time to the metropolitan boroughs, we are not quite clear how far his exertions might have led him towards success. The senatorial project, however, expired in the cradle of its birth—namely, the back parlour of our hero in Blackfriars' Road.

But the deuterogamy, of far graver consideration, was also much nearer consummation. Its history is not a little curious. The lady in question was the eldest of three antique spinsters, who, in the days of Miss Flemming, had been in the ranks of Mrs. Elliston's patronesses. Coeval, and apparently eternal as the *Parcæ* themselves, they were still venerated in their domain, at Bath, over which city they had so long presided; and had actually fixed the destiny of Elliston's first marriage. Whether out of gratitude for the happiness he had so long enjoyed with his late partner, or whether to

propitiate these deities for events yet to come, is uncertain; but true it is, Elliston's devotion was renewed at this venerable shrine, and, mortal as he was, presumed to offer his earthly alliance to no less than Atropos herself. To drop all metaphor, circumstances having led to a renewal of the acquaintance between Elliston and these three sisters, in a moment of strange miscalculation, he made proposal of marriage with the eldest, and which proposal was actually accepted. These three ladies had never known an hour's separation, or a moment's dissension :

“ *Corporibus junctis spiritus unus erat.*”

Their united means yielded them an income equal to their best desires, but not superfluities ; and this question—a very material one—had been left unduly considered almost down to the time fixed for this singular wedding. Elliston, in contemplating a marriage with one-third of the sisterhood, had fondly included in the same meditation, at least two-thirds of the profits, together with a total dismemberment of this tri-sodalitium of virgins. Time, however, having so thoroughly cemented this state of sisterhood, “ *Idem velle et idem nolle*,” the bride elect had no more dreamt of being called upon to tear these family bonds asunder, than six months before, she had ever dreamt of any other ties on this side the grave ; but Elliston now having

come to closer explanation, respecting the future establishment, the awful truth broke like a thunder-clap over the Bath tea-table, and positively sent the three sisters into one fit of hysterics. "Separate!" they, one and all, exclaimed, throwing themselves into each other's embrace, which would positively have been a study for Canova himself—"Separate!—what Heaven has united, let no man tear asunder—separate!" Here, amidst the pauses of renewed hysterics, the common vow was plighted, never to seal such a bond.

What the Fates had resolved admitted of no appeal. The deed of federalism was fatal to the contract of marriage; for no sooner was the determination of the three confederate maidens forwarded to our attendant swain, than Elliston, who felt he could only love but one, was little inclined to marry three. The treaty thereupon was incontinently brought to an end, and Elliston, once again, sought refuge in the green-room of the Surrey Theatre.

Wife and borough had now vanished from before his vision, and in a short time he was about as cool, under the double disappointment, as a certain Spaniard, who, having had one eye struck out at tennis, in a few days after, lost the other by a similar accident; on which he calmly put on his hat, saying—"Good night, gentlemen," and quietly departed.

Elliston had been playing *Pangloss*, in Colman's

comedy of "The Heir at Law." The part of *Dick Dowlas*, was assigned to Mr. Elliston, jun., who made a promising *debut*, a few evenings before, as *Robin*, in the musical entertainment of "No Song no Supper." His conception of the character was correct, and his whole performance received with very warm applause. At the conclusion of the comedy, the original epilogue was spoken by the characters, and the new pantomime of the "Golden Goose," which was well conceived, filled the house to the very roof.

Amongst other untried actors, Elliston, after some deliberation, engaged a young man, chiefly as a singer, but, in point of fact, to do anything (a duty, for the most part, assigned to those who can do nothing) at a small salary. The youth was an agreeable, well-spoken lad, who, on being questioned respecting his former employments, &c., carefully avoided the subject, and was particularly anxious to conceal his family name, on embracing the profession of the stage. Elliston was a little curious on the matter, as the youth was strikingly prepossessing. He played small parts decently, sang tolerably well, and was extremely attentive to business. But this concealment of his patronymic was a somewhat unusual manœuvre, for it eventually turned out, that the lad's honoured father was one of those gentlemen who perambulate the streets, offering an unhappy canary in exchange for an old coat; vending compositions, at corners of bye-places, for taking out

stains from wearing apparel, and haranguing the mob on the virtue thereof; or, at other times, whistling through a tin tube in imitation of birds.

Elliston, who had verily been impressed the youth was the son of a baronet or some county member of parliament, was not a little amused with the discovery. The double policy of concealing the family name, while it suppressed a discreditable origin, and at the same time led the stranger to believe it was highly distinguished, was a bit of tact, which greatly recommended the young artist—introduced him to better parts, and added a crown at least to his weekly salary. The young man, however, remained not many weeks at the Surrey. He turned tobacconist, and took a house in Lambeth, the back parlour of which, he opened as a singing-room. His new auditory were now betrayed into the old illusion, and the vocal tobacconist was again looked on as a nobleman in disguise.

It is related, that when Lamash was acting in Edinburgh, he desired his wife to represent abroad that she was the daughter of an Irish peer, and to go to the Lady Elphinstone with the same story. The experiment succeeded wonderfully. Lamash and his wife were, in consequence, highly patronised, and their benefit was greatly productive.

The following parental and affectionate letter, was addressed by Elliston to Charles and Jane, on the subject of his daughter Lucy's illness, which termi-

nated fatally within ten days afterwards. This young lady was in her twentieth year at the period of her death. Elliston felt deeply and keenly this affliction; and the unaffected declarations of his letter were fulfilled to the very utmost; for nothing was left undone on his own part, to comfort and relieve his child, nor was less attention paid by the brother and sister, to whom Elliston addresses himself:—

“84, Great Surrey Street, January 20, 1831.

“MY DEAR CHILDREN,—I should welcome any hope that was at all reasonable, with the most lively satisfaction; but I fear to indulge an expectation of Lucy’s recovery. Be that, however, as Providence may dictate, we must do our duty while there is any spark of animation remaining; I hasten therefore to execute all your wishes, and send, by the return of mail, the wine and the Eau de Cologne, and other little things which may be required. I hope my dear Lucy is sensible that there is nothing in my power to give, which she may not command; pray present my love and blessing to her, and say how much I am gratified to find that she feels happy under our care.

“It is impossible to express the obligations I owe to Doctor Macgowan—he appears to have acted in the two-fold capacity of father and physician. I have felt almost a vanity in shewing his benevolent epistles to my friends.

“I have inclosed twenty sovereigns, and I recom-

mend you to pay, weekly, for your lodgings, and defray all your general expenses, so that you may have nothing to settle, but the more particular demands attendant upon the sick chamber.

“ I am fully sensible of your desire to ease me of any unnecessary expense ; but I must not hear of Jane’s directing her attention to professional pursuits, while her sister remains in any uncertain state.

“ I was in hopes my recent illness would not have reached your knowledge. I have, however, the pleasure to add that I am recovered, and having just completed all my intended exports for William, my mind is, in one respect, greatly relieved.

“ I distribute your accounts of the invalid, as they arrive, to the family ; and I need not tell you, that they are equally interested with myself in your constant intelligence of Lucy’s afflicting disorder ; indeed, every one, who ever knew her, feels most anxious for reports as they reach me.

“ Fail not to call upon me for any other additions to her comfort, and be assured I am fully sensible of the very excellent care, attention, and unwearied affection which you are so cheerfully exercising in the service, and for the advantage of your sister.

“ From your affectionate father,

“ R. W. ELLISTON.

“ To Charles and Jane Elliston,
&c., &c., &c.”

Like one having escaped shipwreck, our hero now hung up his votive tablets on his widowed walls, in Blackfriars Road, and began sententiously to congratulate himself, and to rehearse the virtues of her, whose place he could never have hoped adequately to supply. Elliston's animal constitution was of that extraordinary texture, that the slightest *relache* of exertions or abuse, met with that generous rebound, which might have taught our infatuated friend what a rich inheritance he was wasting, under the name of enjoyment. Care and abstinence, for a brief term, had produced cheering and wonderful effects. No hermit—not even “Hilarion” himself had been, for three whole weeks, half so holy ; so that, about the middle of December, like a good bird, though often beaten, he returned crowing to the *pit*, and made his reappearance in the part of *Sheva*, before a crowded theatre. The order of the day being “no orders,” at night.

His acting was admirable. The very lees of his days surpassed all youthful broaching, from the prouder soil of Drury Lane or Covent Garden ; and at this moment Elliston was still the first comedian living :—

“And better gleanings thy cropt soil can boast,
Than the crab vintage of the neighbouring coast ;
This difference still the judging world shall see,
Thou copiest Homer, and they copy thee.”

Strange, but not more so than true, he played on

this night with greater effect, and felt more equal to his labours than he had found himself for some few preceding years; and so great was the applause and congratulations he received, that he came forward, after his old habit, and treated his friends with a speech, which nearly occupied the time of a modern farce, but was considerably more entertaining. He said, it was bold for so *young* a man as himself to offer any observations to an audience of the high character which he saw before him, but he should be ungrateful, as a *debutant*, if he did not make some acknowledgments for the encouragement he had received. That he had appeared on that night as the immediate descendant of an old actor, one Mr. Elliston, who had for many years enjoyed the favour of the public, but had, a few weeks before, judiciously—

“Walk’d sober off, before a sprightlier age
Came tittering on, to thrust him from the stage.”

The above humorous allusion to his late infirmity and present restoration, was, of course, pleasantly received. In conclusion he said, that, in July, he should have the honour of appearing in an entirely new character. Alas! it was in July he expired.

Frail, inconsistent man!—and yet *frailer* than humanity itself, Robert William Elliston! The triumph of abstinence was celebrated by *excess* — the very course, by which avoiding, had positively

for a time restored him to health and comfort, was now adopted as the most fit for the occasion. Thoughtless conviviality closed all these flattering scenes ; and though perhaps less than riot, yet at this moment greater than madness.

“ When, prodigal of life, in one rash night,
He lavish'd more than might support three days.”

Elliston was now fast and visibly sinking. His fine natural constitution, which had long been labouring, like a trim vessel in the elemental strife, was too evidently giving way on every side, and each succeeding shock told with the awful certainty of speedy dissolution. In aspect, as well as body, he exhibited a very wreck. His limbs had become almost cumbrous appendages to his frame, which human nature had at length resigned to the brief custody of human art. His features had lost all indication, of intelligence or expression, and his mind, doubtlessly visited by bitter retrospect and unavailing regrets, which his busy round had until now kept at a distance, could yield him but a sorry refuge.

So extraordinary was Elliston's constitution, that he still bore up against this rapid decay. Within a very few weeks of his death, a relative, by marriage, whose professional duties brought him into the neighbourhood of Great Surrey Street, periodically, and who regularly passed an hour

with our invalid on those occasions, when about taking leave one evening, was desired by Elliston to remain till some other visitors had departed, having something particular to communicate to him; he then told him, in a very emphatic tone, that the night before he had had a mysterious and solemn warning, and was quite convinced that his last moments in this world were quite at hand. "I am," said he, "prepared for the event, and should it come in the immediate way of the strange warning I have received, I shall die happy and contented." He dwelt much on the anonymous letters he had, from time to time, received from "Invisiblina." This appeared greatly to affect his spirits, and particularly that he had failed, in all his efforts, to discover the writer; two of these letters he read with the greatest earnestness and excitement, and then destroyed them.

But Elliston once, once again rallied, and on the 24th of June, 1831, came forward in *thorn & saw* he selected as the least fatiguing *but in all respects* it was the effort of a dying man *& was with diff-* culty he struggled through the *thorn & saw* the afterpiece was the *21st representation of the* eyed Susan." The *following* he *he did not* his next appearance *would be the 22d* Megrin.

In minor *theater* the *title of the* are printed before the *performance* & *the*

diate night are concluded ; otherwise, from the state in which Elliston left the theatre he would not have been announced for any future appearance. The day after, it was stated that a severe cold and hoarseness prevented his acting. He never appeared again. Elliston was completely unnerved ; the warning he had received made a strong impression on him ; though unable to act, he took his daily airing in his little carriage.

On Tuesday, the 5th of July, he rang up the servants at a very early hour, and, by six in the morning, was on his road to Norwood, to visit his married daughter, and returned to his house to breakfast. The next morning he started for as early a ride, but had not proceeded far, before he was taken ill, and compelled to return : he had not entered his house many minutes, before he was visited with an apoplectic fit, from which he never recovered. He had appointed the following morning for the execution of a power of attorney, to sell stock for the use of the theatre, which, just then, for the want of his aid, was not doing well. The power was executed on the Thursday morning, but so imperfectly, the Bank would not allow the transfer. The whole of Thursday he was unceasingly talking, in a low and confused tone, calling upon his friends and blessing them in the most placid and resigned manner. It was impossible to ascertain whether he did or did not, during that period, retain his recol-

lection. On Friday, the 8th of July, at half-past six in the morning, this very extraordinary and it may be added, unfortunate man, breathed his last, having but a few months before completed his 56th year.

Bills were immediately put forth, announcing that, in consequence of the lamented death of Mr. Elliston, the Surrey Theatre would be closed on that and the following evenings, and on the night of the funeral.

His will was made just one year before his death—that is, on the 8th of July, 1830. It was witnessed by his old and valued friend, Major Wathen, and his faithful assistant, Benjamin Fairbrother. The names of the executors were known to the latter only; neither of them had been asked to fulfil the office. Mr. Moore, of Bond Street, very wisely declined acting, and relieved himself from considerable trouble; the whole duty fell upon the other executor, Mr. Winston, who, from his great regard for his departed friend, and his children, cheerfully undertook the office, which, though a troublesome one, would have been infinitely more so, had not the family, one and all, cordially rendered him every aid, and expressed their perfect satisfaction at the close of his labours.

“Joyousest of once embodied spirits!” Thus died Robert William Elliston—thus passed from the

mortal scene, one of the most accomplished masters in his peculiar art, who, in the exercise of it, could play with our feelings at his humour, and touch our sympathies as one running over the keys of a harpsichord—thus perished one of the most charming companions, “by the hand of Nature”—one of the readiest apprehension in all things of affinity with the traffic of human life, of unwearied perseverance, and fearless energy.

This, of its kind, although to the full measure of praise, is still only of its kind. Fain would we, at this moment, as the curtain slowly descends on the mortal history of our hero, improve the quality of our applause, and in briefer terms, but more intrinsic value, pronounce him a man as worthy imitation, as he was an actor deserving of renown. The honest sentiment with which we have invoked all that was really meritorious in Elliston’s character, will make us shrink from evasion in speaking of him yet further. As a member of society, the memory of Elliston must suffer so long as it may last—for he lived in disregard and violation of its laws; and as to the claims which good order might have on the citizenship of the world, they were to him mere objects of contempt.

Respectably born, and of near consanguinity with those elevated by their virtues and intellectual acquirements—by them protected and encouraged;

of good education, which his own act alone interrupted in its course to the highest ; favoured and caressed ; united to a woman of no ordinary mind, and of most extraordinary goodness ; blessed with children, dutiful and affectionate ; courted by the great, and flattered by the multitude ; prosperous in the accumulation of his own estate, and fortunate by the accession of worldly advantages, from those who had in earlier days enriched him by their example,—Elliston, it is not too much to say, had a chance thrown into his hands of leaving behind him a nobler name than that of a brilliant player or a boon companion.

The profession of an actor we believe to be a state of temptation. Liabilities to error, which attend all walks of life, are changed here to invitations to err ; and danger, in all its varied way in the profession of the stage, puts on the same comparative increase, to that which waits on other occupations of life. We believe this to be the case, and many have sunk under the baneful influence ; but many also, to their honour, have baffled the subtle foe—many, with but half the armour of defence with which our frail combatant was clothed. Emphatic are the words of Addison : “ A man of talents, but void of prudence, is a Polypheme ; strong, but blind.” In this, Elliston was indeed wanting :

“ That sly, slow thing, with circumspective eyes.”

As a good husband we cannot record him. Sudden displays of sentiment or passion are no substitute for the consistent exercise of marital duty. The first, involuntary and perfectly independent of moral obligation, are subject also to a thousand invasions; while the other, the result of principle alone, is the single test of conjugal worth. In acts of kindness and gallantry, no husband ever showed himself more to advantage than our hero, for he could still play the lover in the days of wedlock: often would he delight to surprise his wife with some tasteful attention of presents and projects for her gratification; yet these were but fleeting impulses, in which vanity (we will not say ostentation) bore an equal part with affection. But the grace of to-day was dishonoured in the shame of the morrow, in which neglect was perhaps the least offence with which he proved her patience. Elliston, we believe, never abandoned a single pleasure to satisfy his wife's repose, nor did he hesitate in his pursuit, though her peace were the inevitable price he must pay for its attainment. Pleasure, pleasure!—that “improba siren,”—was the deity he worshipped; and thus, one of those “desirous of being more happy than any man *can* be, was less happy than most men *are*.”

No one ever proved the proposition more clearly than Elliston, that “a merry fellow is seldom a re-

spectable man." His great convivial qualities, and his equally unremitting attention to the business of life, tended early to his unhappy habit of intemperance, which destroyed both estate and reputation as speedily as they had been acquired, and brought him to an untimely and pitiable end.

"The life of a player," says a modern writer, "which is not marked by some prominent vice or distress, has generally but little worth recording." The sentiment is certainly a strange one; and we lament to take these sorry grounds as any claim on public attention. We hope, however, in the foregoing pages, we have offered something better than a plea of this description; and we must confess, in treating on the fair qualities of our hero, and more particularly his professional deserts, that we have materially failed in doing him justice. If we have made the evil to live after him, the good should *not* be interred with his bones; and we must beg, in justice to his memory, to remind our readers, that there were some deliberate acts of noble generosity on the part of Elliston, which might have added lustre to the brightest character, — witness the instance of his generosity to the poor old player at Bath; his liberality to Wewitzer; and, more particularly, his noble conduct in the case of the unfortunate Mr. L——, as recorded in the early pages of the present volume.

In his worldly undertakings, Elliston was punctual

and faithful. On the rebuilding of Drury Lane Theatre, he liberally and voluntarily expended an enormous sum of money, and was rewarded, if not by ingratitude, at least, with meanness and unnecessary severity on the part of the committee. He was faithful in the discharge of his obligations to all persons concerned under his various managements; and though some may have "lost money by him," as the phrase is, yet was it owing to circumstances, by which most upright men have been overtaken. His energy and activity were truly wonderful. Of this he was, indeed, an example worthy imitation; and his natural perception and practical talents were of that high order, by which fortune might have been defied, and success ensured. With truth he might have demanded,

"Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?"

As a comedian, Elliston was, perhaps, never excelled, and it may be, he will be never equalled. Of this we have endeavoured so particularly to speak in various parts of this history, as the instances have occurred demanding our observations, that it will be unnecessary here to renew the question. Of *Felix, Aranza, Rover, Rapid, Sheva, Belcour, Charles Surface, Leon, Tangent, Wilding, Dowlas, Dornton, Valentine, Lothario, Absolute, &c. &c.*, and last, the celebrated rehearsal of *Falstaff*, we have spoken in their proper places. In the

romantic drama, Elliston, at an early period of his life was greatly attractive: his *Octavian*, and *Sir Edward Mortimer*; the peculiar circumstances, too, under which he played this latter character, would alone have entitled him to the name of an accomplished actor.

In the "business" of the stage, Elliston was always popular. He was, what is called a "fair actor,"—never appropriating the scenic effects of others, but always playing in such a manner as might bring into best operation the professional merits of his brethren. One thing we may be permitted to observe, (for with those at all acquainted with theatrical life, it will doubtless be a claim of commendation.) Elliston never was guilty of the coarse and ungentlemanly act (to say the least of it) of common swearing. No one ever heard an oath pass his lips; and though he lived in too great neglect of religious observances, no man was readier to give respect to those of better example than himself, and he was the very last to treat with levity any question of a sacred nature.

Histrion natus—we may, in fine, term him as a kind of dramatic Alcibiades—great versatility, eccentric enterprise, strange inconsistencies, with a fervent devotion to the public duties to which fortune had called him, constituted him in his time, if not an exemplary general, at least a brilliant soldier.

For ourselves, if we share not the favour we hope for, in the production of these Memoirs, we trust we may be dismissed with forbearance of censure. But, for the claim of the actor and the stage, the loftier language of the poet shall report—

“ If to inflame
The noble youth with an ambitious heat
T’ endure the frosts of danger and of death,
By glorious undertakings, may deserve
Reward or favour from the Commonwealth—
Actors may put in for as large a share
As all the sects of the philosophers.”

For the following original observations on the professional merits of the subject of the above Memoirs, we are indebted to MR. SERJEANT TALFOURD.

IF we might venture to suggest one characteristic of Elliston's acting, as pervading the entire range of delightful images he embodied within our recollection, and distinguishing him from all his contemporaries, we should refer to the perfection with which the elements of earnestness and gaiety were blended in his nature. Others have possessed each in a higher degree, or have possessed both, but as separate powers producing strong contrasts; but no one ever so continually presented the brilliant and affecting tragi-comedy of life.

Elliston had not depth of feeling or severity of purpose for the greatest parts of tragedy, nor airy elegance for those of the most refined comedy; but over all the wide intermediate range, where mirth flutters into sentiment, and folly grows romantic, he ruled, sometimes as with an imperial sceptre, but often as with a magician's wand. With a buoyancy of spirit, which neither misfortune, nor excess, nor time could conquer, he bore a certain weight of seriousness, which made joy reflective and the mock-heroic true.

Whether Elliston was more volatile in his younger days, *we* can only conjecture; in *ours*, he made amends for transforming "the real to a dream" in his performances on the great stage

of society, by putting substance into its scenic copies ; catching " the Cynthia of the minute," and giving permanence to *bright* " Vesper's pageants." His own extraordinary performance of two of the *Three Singles*, in "*Three and the Deuce*"—the sedate and the hilarious brothers—exemplified the manner in which extremes met in him, and qualities, apparently opposite, aided the effect of each other. He was best of all when, amidst his sedateness, a bright twinkle of humour told you that he was wiser than his gravity, and could be merry when he pleased, or when wild mirth sprung out of deep feeling, and remorse enforced its lessons by hints of a frightful ecstasy.

Of these vivid contrasts, elucidating terrible truths, Elliston's acting in *Harry Dornton*, where the youth, after discovering that his follies had brought impending ruin on his father, grows frenzied with champagne and the resolution to sacrifice himself to the *Widow Warren* for her gold, was a striking example. But his performance of *Rover*, in "*Wild Oats*," was, perhaps, the most congenial with his nature of all his later representations—hit the happiest point between stern truth and delightful falsehood—and presented the liveliest picture of such a life as his own—catching, in its course, the colours of myriad sentiments and modes of thought and being, but preserving a deep current of personal consciousness and enjoyment beneath all their changes.

This theatrical existence, and frequent exercise of a regal power amidst the "shows of things," though they cannot excuse the moral obliquities into which he fell, explain the reason why they left less deep and enduring stains on the nature which suffered them, than they would have imprinted on that of an ordinary offender. Accustomed to glide from the enactment of reckless dissipation to the profuse display of scenic benevolence—not happily "to *steer*," but to flit "from grave to gay"—the actor relapsed into the profligate, or stiffened into the paternal, without feeling more difference than a change of scene. In this there was no hypocrisy, scarcely even conscious inconsistency; and when, as we have heard him, he grew eloquent on the dangers and temptations of his profession, and mysteriously announced that he was maturing a plan to render the stage moral, and to train up youth for its achievements in some strict discipline, over which he would himself preside, he was even more sincere—his nature spoke more truly—than in its most "extravagant and erring" moods. When, after some unpardonable aberration, he chose to play the part of the strict and judicious father, he was again as much at home in the domestic circle as even in the green-room, or on the stage. His joy, mirth, morality, fun, all "bore an emphasis," like Hamlet's grief, which deepened as he advanced in years.

Although Elliston's good spirits never failed, his style latterly became *fragmental*—he broke the sentiment into portions ; but to the very last he would jerk out a rich piece of humour with a startling vivacity, or accompany a roguish speech with an irresistible twinkle of the else glazing eye, or send out a noble thought with a sudden inspiration which, for the moment, made you feel him, in spite of the broken utterance and heaviness of brow, to be as young as ever.

Falstaff was the comedian's last achievement, and should have been his greatest ; and, though the physical power for that most arduous of all Shakspeare's characters was wanting, the hearty love of the labour, and the kindling sympathy with the part, made the struggle glorious, and its partial success delightful to all who had followed the course of the actor's varied fortunes. He was then just beginning life anew — in the dawn of a third or fourth revived course of prosperity, like that which had before visited him in his Surrey empire, when the last of this world's curtains fell upon him, still busy with pleasant thoughts and bounding hopes ; and left to us the image of an actor at once as strongly marked by individual peculiarities, and as closely associated with a bright range of forms of many-coloured life, as, ever in his departure, made us feel—"That all our men and women are merely players."

ON Friday, the 15th of July, the remains of this celebrated comedian were removed for interment, from his late residence, Great Surrey Street, to St. John's Church, Waterloo Road.

The funeral was a walking one, in compliance with the will of the deceased; the coffin was of oak, with black nails, bearing on its lid a brass plate, on which was engraved, from his own dictation, the following inscription, the date of death being afterwards supplied :—

“ROBERTUS GULIELMUS ELLISTON,
Natus Septimo die Aprilis, 1774 ;
Obiit Octavo die Julii, 1831.”

The procession reached the church in the following order :—

	Undertaker,	
	Two Porters as Mutes,	
Page,	Feathers,	Page,
	T H E B O D Y,	
	Attended by four Pages,	
	Relatives,	
Mr. Henry Twiselton Elliston,	Mr. Chas. Robt. Elliston,	
„ Wilson,	„ Torre,	
„ Harris,	„ Rundal.	
	Friends, &c.	
Mr. Winston,	Major Wathen,	
Dr. Hyde,	Mr. Roper,	
Mr. Beazley,	„ Rogers,	
„ Brown,	„ Durrant,	
„ Osbaldiston,	„ Fairbrother,	
	Two Pages.	
	N N	

The body was deposited in a vault under the church (enclosed by iron gates) near the coffin of the late Mr. Bengough. The burial service was impressively performed by the Rev. Dr. Tyers Barratt, who was a friend of the deceased. The ceremony was attended by many of the theatrical profession.

In August, 1833, a marble tablet was erected on the south side of the altar of the church, under which the remains were deposited. The following inscription was added, by the son-in-law of the deceased, Mr. Nicholas Torre, of Cheltenham :

HAUD PROCUL AB HOC LOCO SEPULTUS EST

ROBERTUS GULIELMUS ELLISTON,

CUJUS MEMORIÆ SACRUM LIBERI SUI SUPERSTITES,

AMICIS ETIAM QUIBUSDAM OPEM AFFERENTIBUS,

HOC MARMOR PONENDUM CURAVERUNT.

OPTIMUS ILLE PARENS, INGENIO CAPACI PRÆDITUS, NATUS EST

SEPTIMO DIE APRILIS, MDCCLXXIV.; ET, SPE MELIORIS ÆVI,

OBIIT OCTAVO DIE JULII, MDCCCXXI, ANNO ÆTATIS 57.

DUM PIA MELPOMENE, NATO PEREUNTE, QUERELAS

FUNDIT, ET ANTE ALIAS ORBA THALIA GEMIT,

NON MINUS IN LACHRYMAS FIDI SOLVUNTUR AMICI,

NON MINUS EGREGII PIGNORA CHARA TORI ;

THESPICA COMÆDUM LONDINI PULPITA MÆRENT ;

GAUDIA DIFFUGIUNT, DELICIÆQUE TACENT.

A LIST OF THE
CHARACTERS PERFORMED BY ELLISTON,
FROM HIS FIRST APPEARANCE IN LONDON.

HAYMARKET.

25 June, 1796.	<i>Octavian</i>	Mountaineers
<i>(From the Theatre Royal, Bath, his first appearance on that stage)</i>		
"	" <i>Vapour</i>	My Grandmother
30	" <i>Sheva</i>	Jew
29 Aug.	" <i>Sir Edward Mortimer</i>	{ Iron Chest, 13 times that season
7 Sept.	" <i>Romeo</i>	Romeo & Juliet (his benefit)

COVENT GARDEN.

26 Oct.	" <i>Norval</i>	Douglas
24 Nov.	" <i>Philaster</i>	Philaster

HAYMARKET.

19 Aug. 1797	<i>Walter</i>	Children in the Wood
28	" <i>Shylock</i>	Merchant of Venice
4 Sept.	" <i>Othello</i>	Othello
16 May, 1803		"No Prelude"
18	" <i>Hotspur</i>	Henry IV., Part the First
20	" <i>Frederick</i>	Lovers' Vows
25	" <i>Dr. Pangloss</i>	Heir at Law
26	" <i>Frederick</i>	Poor Gentleman
10 June	" <i>La Gloire</i>	Surrender of Calais
24	" <i>Duke of Gloucester</i>	Richard III. (5 times)
11 July	" <i>Gondebert</i>	Battle of Hexham
22	" <i>Eustache</i>	Surrender of Calais
25	" <i>Captain Beldare</i>	Love Laughs at Locksmiths
4 Aug.	" <i>Bob Handy</i>	Speed the Plough
11	" <i>Young Wilding</i>	Lear
18	" <i>The Stranger</i>	Stranger

HAYMARKET—*continued.*

20 Aug. 1803	<i>Henry V.</i>	Henry V.
23	<i>Osmond</i>	Castle Spectre
"	<i>Romaldi</i>	Tale of Mystery
25	<i>Ben Block</i>	Maid of Bristol
27	<i>Peregrine</i>	John Bull
6	<i>Francisco</i>	Tale of Mystery
26 May, 1804	<i>Edward Rigid</i>	Guilty or not Guilty
13 June	<i>Dick Dowlas</i>	Heir at Law
14	<i>Orlando</i>	As you like it
22	<i>Count Almariva</i>	Spanish Barber
3 July	<i>Felix</i>	Hunter of the Alps
7	<i>Abednego</i>	Jew and the Doctor
26	<i>Count Almariva</i>	Follies of a Day
27	<i>Harry Dornton</i>	Road to Ruin
30	<i>Vapid</i>	Dramatist
4 Aug.	<i>Jeremy Diddler</i>	Raising the Wind
15	<i>Sir George Airy</i>	Busy Body
18	<i>Rolla</i>	Pizarro
22	<i>Sir Harry Popinjay</i>	Gay Deceivers
25	<i>Megrim</i>	Blue Devils
6 Sept.	<i>George Barnwell</i>	George Barnwell

DRURY LANE.

24	<i>Doricourt</i>	Belles' Stratagem
30	<i>Archer</i>	Beaux' Stratagem
5	<i>Charles</i>	School for Scandal
13	<i>Don Felix</i>	Wonder
23	<i>Young Bevil</i>	Foundling
2 Nov.	<i>Benedict</i>	Much ado about Nothing
12	<i>Faulkland</i>	Rivals
20	<i>Dalaval</i>	Matrimony
24	<i>Hamlet</i>	Hamlet
29	<i>Young Melville</i>	The Land we live in
4 Jan. 1805	<i>Belcour</i>	West Indian
8	<i>Ranger</i>	Suspicious Husband
31	<i>The Duke Aranza</i>	Honeymoon
23 Feb.	<i>Osmyn</i>	Tancred and Sigismunda
2 March	<i>Penruddock</i>	Wheel of Fortune
26 April	<i>Vivaldi</i>	Venetian Outlaw

DRURY LANE—*continued.*

13 May 1805	<i>Beverly</i>	All in the Wrong
„	<i>Blenval</i>	Castle of Sorrento
17	<i>Comus</i>	Comus
24	<i>Florimond</i>	Youth, Love, and Folly
31	<i>Collins' Ode</i>	

HAYMARKET.

28 June	„	<i>Wilmot</i>	Partners
18 July	„	<i>Jack Mutable</i>	Village
13 Aug.	„	<i>Rover</i>	Wild Oats
15	„	<i>Petruchio</i>	Katherine and Petruchio
19	„	<i>The Three Singles</i>	Three and the Deuce
24	„	<i>Frank Heartall</i>	Soldier's Daughter
9 Sept.	„	<i>Young Rapid</i>	Cure for the Heart Ache
12]	„		Who's Afraid

DRURY LANE.

16 Oct.	„	<i>Macbeth</i>	Macbeth
„	„	<i>Sir Harry Wildair</i>	Constant Couple
1 Nov.	„	<i>Henry Mortimer</i>	Prior Claim
11	„	<i>A Naval Officer</i>	Victory and Death of Nelson
2 Dec.	„	<i>Lord Townly</i>	Provoked Husband
10	„	<i>Lord Belmore</i>	School for Friends
22 Jan. 1806		<i>Zaphimiro</i>	Travellers
7 Feb.	„	<i>Sir Charles Racket</i>	Three Weeks after Marriage
21 April	„	<i>Sir Henry Flutter</i>	Discovery
22	„	<i>Alexander</i>	Alexander the Great
„	„	<i>Valentine</i>	Love for Love
22 May	„	<i>St. Alme</i>	Deaf and Dumb
16 Oct.	„	<i>Howard</i>	Will
20 Nov.	„	<i>Anson</i>	Vindictive Man
25	„	<i>Tekeli</i>	Tekeli
10 Dec.	„	<i>Mr. H.</i>	Mr. H.
5 Jan. 1807		<i>Durimel</i>	Point of Honour
28	„	<i>Sir Harry</i>	Assignment
19 Feb.	„	<i>Fitzharding</i>	Curfew
„	„	<i>Florian de Valencourt</i>	Young Hussar
13 April, 1806		<i>Inkle</i>	Inkle and Yarico
30	„	<i>Lothaire</i>	Adelgitha

DRURY LANE—*continued.*

6 Oct. 1807	<i>Percy</i>	Percy
19	„ <i>Mercutio</i>	Romeo and Juliet
28	„ <i>Blandford</i>	Time's a Tell-tale
19 Nov. „	<i>Rosenberg</i>	Ella Rosenberg
4 Dec. „	<i>Young Mirabel</i>	Inconstant
16	„ <i>Faulkner</i>	Faulkner
6 Jan. 1808	<i>Warwick</i>	Earl of Warwick
22	„ <i>Janus Mem</i>	Something to do
6 Feb. „	<i>Don John</i>	Chances
31 Mar. „	<i>Cheviot</i>	World
12 May „	<i>Beauchamp</i>	Which is the Man
27	„ <i>Lord Sensitive</i>	First Love
1 June „	<i>Edgar</i>	Edgar and Emmeline
4 Jan. 1809	<i>Charles Austincourt</i>	Man and Wife
2 May „	<i>Puff</i>	Critic

HAYMARKET.

25 May, 1811	<i>Welford</i>	Trial by Jury ✓
28	„ <i>Florian</i>	Foundling of the Forest
10 June „	<i>Charles</i>	Royal Oak
25	„ <i>Selico</i>	Africans
26 July „	<i>Batho</i>	Quadrupeds of Quedlinburg
22	„ <i>Pierre</i>	Venice Preserved
26 Aug. „	<i>Job Thornberry</i>	John Bull
30	„ <i>Lothario</i>	Fair Penitent
2 Sept. „	<i>Zarno</i>	Zorinski
23	„ <i>Welford</i>	Darkness Visible
30	„ <i>Robert</i>	Travellers Benighted
3 Oct. „	<i>Frederick</i>	Of Age To-morrow
5	„ <i>Captain Absolute</i>	Rivals
14	„ <i>Don Vincentio</i>	Bold Stroke for a Husband

DRURY LANE.

17 Nov. 1812	<i>Leon</i>	Rule a Wife
13 Jan. 1813	<i>Don Alvar</i>	Remorse
15 Mar. „	<i>Joseph</i>	School for Scandal
22 April „	<i>Captain Daverscourt</i>	Recreation
26	„ <i>Belville</i>	School for Wives
13 May „	<i>Orloff</i>	Russian

DRURY LANE—continued.

1 June 1813	<i>Lackland</i>	Fontainebleau
19 Oct. "	<i>Tangent</i>	Way to get Married
30 "	<i>Harcourt</i>	First Impressions
25 Nov. "	<i>Nourjahad</i>	Illusion
11 Dec. "	<i>Colonel Tamper</i>	Deuce is in him
5 Feb. 1814	<i>Harcourt</i>	Rogues All
2 April "	<i>Sir Robert Bramble</i>	Every One has his Fault
8 June "	<i>Wilford</i>	Iron Chest
28 "	<i>Frank Liberal</i>	School for Prejudice
15 Oct. "	<i>Sylvanus Fathom</i>	Policy
1 Nov. "	<i>Jean de Paris</i>	Jean de Paris
16 Mar. 1815	<i>Bolingbroke</i>	Richard II.
8 Nov. 1819	<i>Richmond</i>	Richard III.
11 Dec. "	<i>Duke's Servant</i>	High Life below Stairs
22 "	<i>Cassio</i>	Othello
15 Jan. 1820	<i>Don Presto</i>	Gallantry
19 Feb. "	<i>An Ode</i>	Sacred and Secular Music
3 May "	<i>Wildlove</i>	Lady and the Devil
31 "	<i>Welford</i>	Fashionable Levities
19 June "	<i>Meadows</i>	Deaf Lover
5 Dec. "	<i>Tag</i>	Spoil'd Child
1 Aug. 1821	<i>The King</i>	Coronation of George IV.
3 Nov. "	<i>Tom Tick</i>	Folly as it Flies
5 "	<i>Sir George Rakewell</i>	Maid and Wife
22 Dec. "	<i>The King</i>	Giovanni in Ireland
2 Jan. 1822	<i>Rostrum</i>	Secrets worth Knowing
13 Mar. "	<i>Count Almaviva</i>	Marriage of Figaro
23 Oct. 1823	<i>Prince of Wales</i>	Henry IV., First Part
4 Nov. "	<i>Young Marlow</i>	She Stoops to Conquer
11 June, 1824	<i>Silvester Daggerwood</i>	Silvester Daggerwood
3 July "	<i>Egerton</i>	Man of the World
	<i>Falstaff</i>	Henry IV., First Part

APPENDIX.

Copy of the Lord Chancellor's Report to the King on the Petitions of Theatres, by which the long-disputed question of theatrical claims was finally settled :

“ The Chancellor, with his humble duty to your Majesty, begs permission to submit the result of the consideration which he has been able to bestow upon the memorials of Mr. Arnold, of the patent theatres, of the Haymarket, and of Mr. Greville, which your Majesty was graciously pleased to direct should be referred to him in order to arrive at a sound conclusion on the subject matter of the memorials, and to give satisfaction to the parties as well as the public, the Chancellor requested the assistance of three learned judges, the Vice-Chancellor, the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and Mr. Justice James Parke. They were pleased to attend the hearing which took place at six several meetings, in his Honour's court at Lincoln's Inn, and after conferring fully with these learned judges, the Chancellor has the honour to lay before your Majesty the opinion which he has formed, and in which they unanimously concur. It was not decreed at the hearing by any of the parties that a licence from the Crown is necessary in order to authorize the opening of a theatre within the precincts in question ; whatever doubts might have been entertained upon this point, had it been urged, no question was made of it by any one.

“ The question, how far the patents already granted preclude any new grants, whether by way of patent or licence, was argued ; but the Chancellor has no doubt whatever on this point, nor had any of the learned judges, and it may be taken as quite clear ; nor indeed, in the end, was it much disputed on the part of the patent theatres, that your Majesty has the entire power, by law, to make whatever change your Majesty

may think fit in the rights already granted to these theatres, or to revoke those grants altogether, or to grant to other parties rights inconsistent with those granted to the patent theatres in former times.

“After taking into full consideration the relative positions of the parties, the claims of individuals connected with the patent theatres, the sums of money invested in the concerns of all the theatres, and the interests of the public, the Chancellor humbly submits to your Majesty, with the concurrence of the learned judges, that it may be desirable to grant Mr. Arnold an extension of his licence, so as to include the whole of the months of May and October.

“All which is humbly submitted to your Majesty for your royal consideration.

(Signed)

BROUGHAM, C.

Berkeley Square, 19th Feb., 1831.

(Signed) { L. Shadwell.
M. Tindal.
James Parke.”

THE KING'S REPLY AND ORDER.

“Brighton, Feb. 20, 1831.

“The King will not delay acknowledging the receipt of the Lord Chancellor's letter of yesterday, and assuring him of his sense of the close attention and consideration which he has given to the memorials of Mr. Arnold, of the patent theatres, of the Haymarket, and of Mr. Greville, and desiring that his Majesty's acknowledgments may be conveyed to the Vice-Chancellor, the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and Mr. Justice James Parke, whose assistance the Lord Chancellor very properly requested upon this occasion. . . . The question has always appeared to the King one of great importance to the public, as one embracing considerations connected with the comfort, entertainment, and accommodation of all classes, as well as of great importance to the individuals who have embarked their properties in the undertakings, tending to promote

those public objects; but his Majesty's view of the question has always been a general one, wholly unbiassed by feeling or prejudice in favour of either, or any, of the parties interested in the decision.

"His Majesty, therefore, rejoices that, after so patient a hearing, and such deliberate consideration given to the subject, the Lord Chancellor and the three judges with whom he has conferred, have come to an unanimous opinion upon the question submitted to them, and above all, that they are satisfied that the power is vested by law in the King, beyond the reach of doubt or question, to make whatever changes his Majesty may think fit, in the rights already granted to the patent theatres, or to revoke those grants, or to grant to other parties rights inconsistent with those granted to those patent theatres in former times.

"Under this view of the question, resting upon such advice, and in consideration of the further observations made by the Lord Chancellor, the King cannot hesitate to act upon his recommendation, that there shall be granted to Mr. Arnold an extension of his licence, so as to include the whole of the months of May and October.

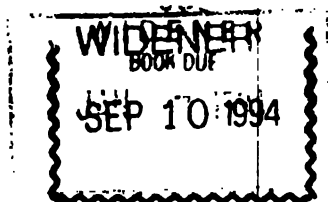
(Signed)

"WILLIAM R."

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